

**ASSESSING THE TRANSITIONAL NEEDS OF
PHYSICALLY DISABLED SCHOOL-LEAVERS:**

A Comparative Study of Inter-Disciplinary Meetings

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DECLARATION

I declare:

- a) that this thesis has been composed by the candidate, E. Kay M. Tisdall; and**
- b) this is the work of the candidate alone.**

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ABSTRACT

The difficulties and lack of opportunities facing many young disabled people when they leave school are well-documented. The transition from school to 'adulthood' may be difficult for any young person, but the imposed logistical and social limitations of a disability can make the transition even more difficult for young disabled people. While commonalties exist for all young people with disabilities, statistics show that those with physical (and additional) disabilities may be particularly disadvantaged when they leave school.

Reasons for young disabled people's difficulties are oft-repeated in the transition research: the lack of service continuity when the young people leave school; the bewildering array of agencies and eligibility requirements; and the failure to make coherent post-school plans. The literature constantly urges professionals, parents and young people to work together through 'inter-disciplinary collaboration'.

What kind of solutions are such inter-disciplinary collaborations to the 'transitional problem'? How do the collaborators perceive the 'transitional problem' and thus how do the collaborators seek to address it? How do the various collaborators contribute to these perceptions? Case studies were undertaken of two different types of inter-disciplinary collaborations: the Future Needs Assessment (FNA) meetings held in a Scottish school and Educational-Vocational (EV) Assessment meetings at the Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre, in Canada. Both types of meetings attempt to carve out transitional paths for young people with physical (and additional) disabilities. In the last one or two years of secondary schooling, the needs and capabilities of a young person are assessed; viewpoints considered from educational and other service professionals, the young person and parents; and a blue-print of goals, suggestions and service provision formed. As such, the assessment meetings provide windows into the workings of inter-disciplinary collaborations, and a means to address the research questions.

The fieldwork data were considered from four perspectives: how participants and legislation described the purpose(s) of the meetings; young people's involvement within the meetings; how decisions/ recommendations were made; and, through case studies of four meetings, how satisfied participants were with their meetings.

Abstract

Key differences were noted within the meetings. The EVs were a voluntary service to eligible clients in the Sheldon area, whereas the FNA process was legally required for all young people recorded as having 'special educational needs' in Scotland. A cohesive team of professionals comprehensively assessed and advised EV young people, but the EV team lacked most key post-school agency representatives. Disparate professionals were brought together for the FNA meetings, and at times displayed a lack of collaboration or actual conflict, but the FNA professionals did represent several key 'gate-keepers' to community services. EV meetings covered a broad range of possible transitional goals, whereas the FNA meetings tended to repeat the same two choices: staying at school or going to Further Education college. Both meetings displayed examples of good and bad practice. In particular, the EV professionals consistently worked to create a comfortable and inclusive atmosphere for young people (and parents), whereas a large minority of FNA young people and parents felt excluded by their interactions with FNA professionals.

Using the theoretical construct of 'empowerment', particular EV and FNA meetings demonstrated the possibility of empowering the young people. Other meetings showed how the dominant professional and bureaucratic frameworks failed to promote empowerment, or actively disempowered, the young people. If no action tended to result from EV meetings, how empowering were they to young people? If young people felt criticised and ignored in their FNA meetings, and if the same two choices were always debated, how empowering were the meetings to the young people? The analysis concluded that the inter-disciplinary meetings continued to 'manage' the problem—particularly because of their focus on the individual—rather than substantially challenge the difficulties and lack of opportunities for the young people when they left school.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CERI Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.

Ontario

DPCR Disabled Persons' Community Resources.
ESS Easter Seal Society.
EVs Education-Vocational Assessments.
IPRCs Identification and Placement Review Committees.
OACDP Ontario Advisory Council for Disabled Persons.
SRC Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre.
VRS Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Scotland

EDG Employment Department Group.
FE Colleges Further Education Colleges.
FNAs Future Needs Assessments.
SCPR 1989 survey Social and Community Planning Research 1989 survey.
SEN Special Educational Needs.

GLOSSARY

CERI	Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. A sub-division of the international Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), CERI recently completed a ten-year study of young disabled people's transition from school, across OECD member countries. These countries included both Canada and Great Britain.
People with disabilities or Disabled people	The preferred terminology of the OACDP, as opposed to 'the disabled'. For further discussion of terminology, see Appendix A.
People with learning difficulties	The Scottish terminology referring to people who formerly were described as being 'mentally handicapped'. For further discussion of terminology, see Appendix A.

Ontario

DPCR	Disabled Persons' Community Resources. An advocacy and information service in Sheldon, DPCR recently surveyed local young people with physical disabilities and published their results: <i>Bridges to Independence</i> (1991). (Note: 'Sheldon' is the alias for the city where the Ontario fieldwork took place.)
ESS	Easter Seal Society. A charitable organisation that provides a comprehensive information and support service for parents of children with physical disabilities—and for the young people themselves—from birth to age eighteen. ESS nurses sometimes refer the young people to the EV Assessments and attend the EV meetings.
EVs	Education-Vocational Assessments. Inter-disciplinary assessments offered at the SRC, by the Young Adult and Adolescent Team. Young people with physical disabilities, who are in their last one or two years of high school and live in the Sheldon area, can apply for these assessments. For further description, see pages 27-29.
EV full meeting	See 'EV team meeting' below.
EV outside professionals	See 'EV team members' below.
EV team meeting	For the purposes of this research, the first portion of the EV meeting—when only professionals met—is referred to as the 'team meeting'. The second portion of the EV meeting—when the young person and parents joined the professionals—is called the 'full meeting'.

EV team members	Professionals on the Young Adult and Adolescent team. Other professionals—either from the young people's schools or an ESS Nurse—are called 'outside professionals' for the purposes of this research. When no distinction seemed pertinent, the EV team members and 'outside' professionals are referred to as EV 'professionals'.
IPRCs	Identification and Placement Review Committees. Convened by the local education region, the committees decide whether the young people are 'exceptional' and what are the most appropriate educational placements and resourcing. This process is similar to the Scottish recording procedure.
OACDP	Ontario Advisory Council for Disabled Persons. The Council advises the Ontario government on matters affecting people with disabilities. The Council's publications are typically based on extensive consultations with disabled people, organisations representing them and other relevant parties.
SRC	Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre. The EVs are held at the SRC.
VRS	Vocational Rehabilitation Services. VRS is a provincially funded counselling and advisory service. VRS also provides technical aids, if related to employment, and funds certain types of assessment and training.

Scotland

FE colleges	Further Education colleges. Roughly equivalent to Ontario's community colleges. Certain FE colleges offer courses particularly geared for students with special needs.
FNAs	<p>Future Needs Assessments. Inter-disciplinary assessments required by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended (Section 65B). All young people who are recorded as having 'special educational needs' have such assessments, to choose post-school provision. In Colburne Region during the time of fieldwork, three types of meetings were held:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">FNA1s—introductory meetings for planning future assessments;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">FNA2s—on the basis of the assessments, planning meetings for the young people's post-school futures; and</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">FNA3s—review meetings.</p> <p>For further description, see pages 29-32.</p> <p>(Note: 'Colburne' is the alias for the Region where the Scottish fieldwork took place.)</p>

- Records of SEN Records of Special Educational Needs. If a child or young person is decided as having special educational needs through an inter-disciplinary assessment, the education authority representative writes a record of these needs and the resources that should be provided to meet them. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended introduced this procedure. For further description, see page 20.
- SCPR 1989 survey Social and Community Planning Research 1989 survey. Commissioned by the Employment Department Group, the SCPR sampled 40 000 households between June and September 1989. The research addressed issues of employment for disabled people. (Prescott-Clarke, P. (1990) *Employment and Handicap*. London: Social and Community Planning Research.)
- Section 13 assessment and report Before an Education Authority can fulfil its FNA duties towards a young person, it must obtain the opinion of the local Social Work Department on whether the young person is 'disabled'. If the young person is deemed 'disabled', the Social Work Department is legally required to undertake a 'Section 13' assessment and report, on what statutory services should be provided for the young person. (Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, Part III Section 13)
- SEN Special Educational Needs. The phrase replaced the previous medical categories, by which young people access special educational resources. Children and young people recognised as possibly having SEN are extensively assessed by a variety of professionals. If the young people are deemed to have SEN, then Records of SEN are opened. (Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended) For further description, see page 20.

PREFACE: MY PREVIOUS ONTARIO RESEARCH

In the summer of 1989, I travelled around Ontario, Canada speaking to young people with physical disabilities¹, their service providers and older people with physical disabilities.

I asked young people what they thought of themselves, the habilitation system² and their futures. At the time of my study, the young people were preparing to leave the relatively protected environment of childhood and school, for the 'real' world of adulthood. The young people had grown up surrounded by the habilitation system; they had heard the rhetoric of the habilitators, made it part of their self-images and were going out in the world to test its reality.

The habilitators and older people with disabilities were similarly asked what they thought of the habilitation system and the young people's futures. I saw the habilitators as the 'experts' of the system: professionals who passed on the possibilities and realities to the young people. The older people with disabilities (ranging from age twenty to age 28) had already made the transition from 'childhood to adulthood', and had tested what habilitators had told them against the realities of their world. The young people might not face exactly the same opportunities and difficulties as these older people with disabilities, but the older people's experiences and feelings provided another perspective by which to consider the views of the young people.

By the end of my research, I had talked to 30 young people with physical disabilities throughout Ontario, who were in their last few years of high school, twenty of their service providers, and twelve older people with physical disabilities. During the next year, I wrote up my syntheses of these conversations for my thesis at Harvard University: *Conflicts of Integration and Participation: an Ethnographic Account of Young People with Physical Disabilities in Ontario*.

¹For a discussion of terminology, see Appendix A**.

²'Habilitation' is deliberately used rather than 'rehabilitation'. 'Rehabilitation' is an inappropriate term to refer to services for people who have been disabled since birth (for discussion, see Tisdall 1990). (Dr. J. Latter raised this alternative term.)

What were the results from my triangulation of views?

Most importantly, the study asserted the absolute need to listen to and value young people's opinions. Young people repeatedly told me of being ignored or patronised by others, and particularly by habilitators—whether over decisions about their futures, their feelings about themselves or reports of sexual abuse. Dani³ (aged 17) told me her experience of interacting with certain habilitators:

I never get the chance to say what I feel. They always make up their minds before asking me. And that really bugs me, because I feel if you don't say what's on your mind, you're not human.

Rehabilitators themselves realised that young people with disabilities needed to make their own decisions. A nurse said to me:

A lot of people never ask a disabled person how they feel, what they think should happen about this, that or the other thing, and that's important.

Action had been taken ideologically and practically to prevent disabled people's exclusion from society. The action had been successful to some extent, for Dani and others with whom I spoke were well able to articulate their anger at the stereotypes society still often imposed. Society, I was told, offered to accept disabled people and give them help if they took on the 'sick role', the 'child role', the 'passive disabled' or the 'cheerful disabled' roles. Disabled people firmly and passionately told me that such stereotypes worked against their self-esteem and generally encouraged dependence.

More positively, many habilitators and older people with disabilities told me of the rapid expansion in opportunities for young disabled people in the past decade. Previously, disabled children had been offered segregated and inferior schooling. Through Bill 82⁴ and various court cases, the right of disabled children to be educated in the provincial school system was recognised. Discrimination had been recognised in the work place, and laws passed to forbid it: for example, the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, and the National *Charter of Absolute Rights and Freedoms*. The government⁵ had assumed some responsibility for the under-employment of disabled people,

³All research participants' names have been changed to protect anonymity.

⁴Bill 82 is the common reference to the Ontario Education (Amendment) Act 1980.

⁵'Government' refers to both the provincial government of Ontario and the federal government.

and put considerable money and services into finding solutions. The government had moved away from an institutionalisation policy to a policy of integrating disabled people into the community. These changes had truly revolutionised the world facing disabled people, giving them rights and possibilities they never had before.

The rapid transformation was ideologically grounded in concepts of 'integration', 'normalisation', 'full participation' and 'independence'. These words were important on two levels: one, they had motivated most of the institutional changes in the system; and, two, these words had become a key part of the habilitators' message to the young people: 'You will be independent. You will be integrated. You can fully participate. You can have a 'normal' life.' I found that, while these 'golden ideals' had inspired great change, they could be problematic both in how they were defined in practice and in their impact on some young people.

For example, many people interviewed criticised the use of 'normalisation', as implying that young people had 'abnormalities' that must be 'normalised'. One disability advocate proposed, instead, the inverse: "*We are just normal people trying to normalise the world around us.*" One disabled woman explained to me that the 'golden ideals' were sometimes used within the habilitation system to ignore the reality of physical disability:

And I think that generally people try so hard [to promote normality] because there is such awkwardness and such discomfort in dealing with the disabled, we always try and create a common denominator, so there is always talk of when we 'normalise' and when we 'integrate', and when we just see your needs as special as the next guy's needs. We're trying to put things—we're trying to put everybody—at the same level.

We're not recognising some of the special needs and they go neglected and ignored and then normalcy cannot be achieved ... The concepts to me are so contradictory to the real situation. And people, I think, bandy the words around without really understanding them or understanding what they mean when they say them.

In my interviews, those disabled people who felt they were fulfilling the 'golden ideals' were very proud that they did so. Their successes seemed to heighten their self-esteem and to encourage them to achieve their goals. However, those young disabled people who did not feel 'independent', 'integrated', 'fully participating' or 'normal' tended to blame only themselves, rather than to perceive the lack of opportunities or other types of societal exclusion as possible barriers. For example, when Rachel was refused a

summer job moving boxes because she could not answer a telephone, she felt she had failed to prove herself as 'independent' and capable—rather than asking if the employer was being discriminatory by requesting an additional skill apparently unnecessary for the advertised job. For young people like Rachel, perceived personal failures in meeting the 'golden ideals' did cause considerable anguish and lowered self-esteem.

The young people I interviewed were typically clear on what the 'golden ideals' meant for their futures. Each young person had her/ his own specific goals, but as a group they identified several core objectives—such as earning an income through employment, living away from their parents and having an intimate relationship with another person. The vast majority of young people believed these goals were possible: after all, as many young people explained to me, they were 'just as normal as anybody else', they could be 'independent', they could 'fully participate', and most were already 'integrated' into 'mainstream' schools.

How realistic were the young people's goals? The older people with disabilities told me of the great difficulties they and their disabled peers had faced in fulfilling such goals, when they had left school. Throughout many interviews, I was told of the significant drop-off of services and possibilities post-school. Their education might be of little use in a labour market that did not appreciate their skills; they would be likely to find communities that were physically and socially inaccessible; and they might well have difficulty in gaining access to what was already an inadequate range of fragmented services. While some of the young people might well be 'successes', many of the young people might find it very difficult to reach their articulated goals.

What could be done to improve the young people's transition from school? My Ontario study outlined some of the problems; I wanted to know more about possible solutions. I thus decided to research further the 'transitional problem'—both as it was described in the literature and how it was addressed in practice—and its proposed solutions.

I was struck by the great deal of effort, good intentions and money that had been expended in Ontario to try and improve young people's post-school opportunities. Yet, the policies and services had apparently failed to alter most young people's post-school situations. Many professionals themselves voiced their frustration in their own services' failures to improve significantly the

post-school possibilities for young people. I thought my proposed research, therefore, had to go further than present Ontario 'solutions'. New approaches are often difficult to perceive from within a system; I felt that a comparative look at how another system was dealing with the 'transitional problem' might well inform and challenge present Ontario thinking and practice.

Scotland presented itself as a suitable site for comparative research on the 'transitional problem' and transitional services. Like Ontario, Scotland is largely English-speaking and I did not want to attempt work in another language than my own. The 'transitional problem' was gaining considerable attention in Scotland, and many similar transitional issues had been outlined as found in Ontario (see Chapter Two for further description). Perhaps most importantly from my point of view, various people within the University of Edinburgh and certain Scottish professionals supported the idea of such research. Consequently, I embarked on a comparative research project on the 'transitional problem', for my Ph.D. thesis.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The transition from school to 'adulthood' may be difficult for any young person. With the changing world—for example, increasing youth unemployment throughout the Western hemisphere, young people's extended financial dependence on their parents well into their twenties, the tendency to marry and have children later—many of the markers generally considered part of adulthood are achieved later in life, if at all (for example, see Ward et al. 1991, p.7).

For young people with disabilities, the transition can be even more problematic. The imposed logistical and social limitations of a disability can block paths commonly followed by nondisabled young people: for example, finishing one's education, holding a job, being physically and emotionally intimate with someone, and moving away from home. Many young disabled people—although they overwhelmingly want to achieve these dimensions of 'adulthood' (Tisdall 1990)—are presently not able to succeed in all or many of these areas. (For further discussion, see Preface and Chapter Two.)

Young disabled people face certain obstacles whatever their disabilities, but opportunities for people with physical disabilities do differ from those offered to young people with learning (and other) difficulties (Mulkey & Brechin 1988). For example, Ontario's lobby for people with learning difficulties is very strong. As a result, considerable work opportunities exist for this population of young people. The same is not true for young people with physical disabilities, and they can be offered placements attuned to learning difficulties rather than to physical limitations (see Tisdall 1990). In Great Britain, Michael Hirst found that most of the young people in his study with learning difficulties were occupied during the weekdays, after they left school, while those with physical disabilities were most often completely unoccupied and isolated at home (1983 p.277; 1987 p.70). While many similar transition obstacles can be recognised for all young disabled people, the transition from school to 'adulthood' may be even more difficult for young people with physical disabilities.¹

¹For the sake of readability, the phrases 'young disabled people' or 'young people with disabilities' will generally be used, although this research predominantly addresses transition for young people with physical disabilities (who may also have other disabilities). Many of the issues do, however, have application for all disabled young people, whatever their disability. (For further discussion, see pages ** methodology.)

Working Together to ‘Solve’ the ‘Transitional Problem’

Repeatedly, the transition literature criticises the lack of service continuity when the young people leave school, the bewildering array of agencies and eligibility requirements, and the failure to make coherent plans (see, for example, Disabled Persons’ Community Resources (DPCR) 1991, p.1). Repeatedly, the transition literature urges professionals², parents and young people to work together:

Successful transition depends on inter-agency co-operation, collaboration and planning. Specialist and sector concerns result in a narrow focus. Individuals and agencies cannot on their own support effective transitions. Professionals working in education, social service, health, employment and voluntary organisations can make an effective contribution to transition only by working with other professionals, with parents and with the young people themselves. (McGinty & Fish 1992, p.ix)

Attempts to co-ordinate young people’s transition from school have developed in various countries. For example, the Kurator system in Denmark appoints a key worker, working with other appropriate professionals, to advise and support young disabled people from the age of fourteen to their early twenties. In the United States, Wehman et al. have extensively developed the concept of ‘individual transitional plans’, to aid young disabled people in leaving school. Scottish legislation requires professionals to consider young disabled people’s transition, through the Future Needs Assessments (FNAs). In Ontario, the Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre (SRC)³ brings together an inter-disciplinary team to help young disabled people plan their futures post-school, through the Educational-Vocational (EVs) Assessments.

Many of the above programmes have existed for over a decade and the ‘transitional problem’ still exists. Perhaps it is time to question these inter-disciplinary collaborations more closely. **What kind of solutions are such collaborations? How do the collaborators perceive the transitional**

²To aid comprehensibility, the term ‘professionals’ will be used throughout this research. (See Appendix A** for discussion of terminology.)

³Throughout this research, names and places have been anonymised to protect the identity of participants. Ontario and Scotland are named because the policies and opportunities available are particular to these areas, and the relatively large areas covered by Ontario and Scotland do not exactly pin-point the location for fieldwork.

problem and, thus, how do the collaborations seek to address it? How do the various collaborators contribute to these perceptions?

This research sought to address these questions through case studies of two different types of inter-disciplinary collaborations: the FNAs held in Colburne Region's Robertson School and SRC's EVs. In both places, assessment meetings were held as practical attempts to carve out transitional paths for young disabled people. These assessment meetings identified the issues of concern—such as employment, further education and independent living—and suggested pathways to 'success'. In the last one or two years of schooling, the needs and capabilities of individual young people were assessed; viewpoints considered from educational and service professionals, the young people and their parents; and blueprints of goals, suggestions and service provision were formed. In theory, these meetings made suggestions and decisions that channelled young people into paths that they would likely follow for the rest of their lives.

Both types of meetings offered inter-disciplinary collaboration to help the young people in their transitions from school. But the meetings differed in how such collaboration was offered. The Scottish FNAs were a **statutory** requirement for all young people identified as having 'special educational needs'. The EVs were **voluntary** options for young people with physical disabilities, who lived in the local Sheldon area. The Scottish FNAs took place within the **educational system** whereas the Sheldon EVs took place within the **medical-rehabilitation system**. The Scottish FNAs brought together disparate **professionals from various agencies**; the Sheldon EVs typically brought together **outside educationalists with the Rehabilitation Centre's team** of professionals. While similar in bringing professionals, individual young people and parents together to address the 'transitional problem', the different meetings represented different policy choices as to how such collaboration was offered.

The comparative research between Sheldon and Colburne Region was proposed for two reasons. First, the comparison hoped to question assumptions and suggest possibilities at the level of practice. What could the two different types of assessments learn from each other? Second, and what is more important, the comparison hoped to break open present transitional 'problem-setting'. The transition literature debates endlessly on what transitional goals should be (particularly over employment as a or the transitional goal)—how could practice inform this debate? How did these

meetings conceptualise the problem of transition? What solutions did they offer? What were the advantages and disadvantages of such problem-settings and solutions?

The research agenda is not all-encompassing. For logistical reasons of Ph.D. research, the fieldwork was restricted to one year. Young people, therefore, could not be followed longitudinally to chart the meetings' effects on the young people's transitions. The research is restricted to one site in each region (although other similar meetings were attended in both countries), for fieldwork and analysis to be manageable for one researcher on a time-limited project.

What the research can offer is an intensive analysis of two different types of inter-disciplinary collaborations, held in two different countries. The research can offer particular interpretations that can encourage us to ask questions previously unthought-of, and to consider possibilities previously unconsidered. The research aims to break open the present transitional problem-settings, to consider the ramifications of what we presently take for granted.

The Following Chapters

This chapter has provided an overview of the research's rationale and introduced three research questions. The following chapters fill out aspects of the research questions through reviews of transition research and relevant theoretical literature:

- In **Chapter Two**, two hypothetical case studies of Billy and Sara present research on disabled people's post-school futures. The chapter thus presents a particular version of the 'transitional problem', through a comprehensive view of the transition research. The chapter concludes with a description of the Future Needs and Educational-Vocational Assessments held at Robertson School and the Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre respectively.
- While Chapter Two provides some of the statistics and qualitative findings of the transition research, **Chapter Three** considers some of the conceptual structures that underpin and thus determine that research. Particular transition models are selected to represent the transition literature, and are used to examine how the transition literature theoretically conceptualises the 'transitional problem'.
- **Chapter Four** suggests some tools by which to break open the 'transitional problem' setting: an awareness of the politics behind 'social problems',

gleaned from the 'construction of social problems' literature, and a particular typology of policy frameworks developed in comparative policy research by Kirp (1982) and others.

From the issues and questions raised in these chapters, a particular methodology for this research is put forward in **Chapter Five**.

The analysis of the observed FNA and EV meetings is divided into four chapters:

- **Chapter Six** considers descriptions of the meetings' purposes. Comparisons were made to provide insight into the meetings themselves and participants' individual perceptions of them.
- **Chapter Seven** looks at young people's involvement in the meetings.
- **Chapter Eight** asks how and what type of decisions/ recommendations were made at the meetings.
- **Chapter Nine** presents and analyzes four case studies. Two FNA and two EV meetings were selected. A case where participants expressed high satisfaction was selected from each type of meeting; another case was selected from each type of meeting, where participants expressed low satisfaction. The case studies aimed to provide a sense of the whole meetings as well as to investigate issues related to satisfaction: met and unmet expectations, professionals' handling of young people's 'realism', and young people's and parents' involvement.

The analytical chapters thus represent a progression from what participants thought the meetings were for, to how the meetings proceeded, to what participants thought resulted from the meetings.

Based on the data presented in these analytical chapters, **Chapter 10** concludes the thesis with a look back to theoretical concepts presented in the introductory chapters and with a look forward to what the two types of meetings might learn from each other.

CHAPTER TWO: TRANSITION RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

Increasingly, the post-school experiences of young disabled people are being explored and documented. Government statistics consider a population of 'disabled people'; researchers look at cohorts of young people with disabilities leaving school and follow them for several years; studies are funded to consider students' preparation for, and possibilities, post-school.

What is reported paints a dismal picture. Anderson and Clarke conclude from their in-depth interviews of English young people with disabilities:

Our own research, which broadly covers the fifteen to eighteen year old age group and the periods just before and just after leaving school, suggests that it is without doubt the over-sixteens, rather than those still at school, for whom provision is poorest ... too little is done both while the young people are still in school and afterwards to ease the transition from school to post-school life. (1982 p.xiii)

Disabled Persons' Community Resources (DPCR) surveyed young people with disabilities living in the Sheldon area, as well as their parents and professionals. The report's summarising statements closely parallel Anderson and Clarke's findings:

... deficiencies in health and social service provision for young adults with disabilities, augmented by the difficulties in the transitional period between child and adult programming, have resulted in gaps in service provision for the young adult population. (1991 p.6)

Time and time again, research, articles and reports comment how much more difficult the 'transitional period' is for young disabled people than for their nondisabled peers. Hutchinson and Tennyson explain that the transition to 'adulthood' is:

... a period during which most young people pass at sometime in their lives, which is generally accepted as a phase characterised by uncertainty, doubts and the need to establish an identity and role in life. What is difficult for the majority of young people is doubly traumatic for those with severe physical disability for whom the future is often a bleak and unattractive prospect. (1986 p.x)

Two People...

Meet Sara and Billy¹.

Sara lives with her mother in a small rental apartment in a suburb of Sheldon, Ontario. She has just turned eighteen years old and is eager to graduate from her high school this year. Sara was born with a disability that caused liquid to build up in her brain. Quite early on her life, Sara had surgery that inserted a shunt to drain off the liquid into her stomach. Sometimes in conversation, people ask Sara to repeat herself because they have difficulty understanding her train of thought; Sara often feels frustrated by this. She dislikes mathematics because she finds it hard to understand the questions. She can walk short distances with her callipers (wrist crutches) but prefers the speed of her wheelchair. Extremely interested in wheelchair sports, Sara can move very quickly with her manual chair.

Billy lives in a council house in Colburne Region, Scotland with his mother and step-father. He too has just turned eighteen and is looking forward to leaving school this coming June. Billy was born with a disability affecting his central nervous system. As a result, he lacks fine motor control and needs some help both day and night to take care of his daily needs. Billy does not walk and has recently obtained a monolithic electric wheelchair. He has difficulty controlling the chair because it seems to have a mind of its own—the chair enjoys wheelchair racing at a speed Billy does not and recently nearly tipped Billy into a pond. In the past year Billy has gained increasing control of his left hand so he has acquired a touch talker, which is a coded keyboard that talks. Billy hopes that a loud mechanical voice will be an effective way to make people stop and listen.

People like Sara and Billy are the real people behind the statistics and research. They have been surrounded by a plethora of professionals, services, regulations and legislation from their earliest years due to their disabilities. Now they are ready to leave school, they face a whole new range that will influence, help and constrain their lives. What are their likely futures?

(The following narratives present statistics and viewpoints from a variety of research documents and service descriptions. Due to space

¹Sara and Billy are not real people, but rather composites of young people I know in Ontario and Scotland.

constraints, not all possible aspects of 'adulthood' can be comprehensively covered. Instead, four specific areas are addressed—income, employment, education and living within the community—and the Future Needs (FNAs) and Educational-Vocational (EVs) Assessments described.

The populations studied/ surveyed are not consistent across the research. When possible, statistics are extracted that pertain particularly to young people with physical disabilities, but such statistics are rarely available.)

Income

Sara and Billy are well aware that they will need their own sources of money to live in their communities. Not only must they pay the rent and buy food, but they must have some income in order for transportation, recreation and socialising.

Sara may choose to apply for the disability pension, which promises to provide a minimum income for Ontario residents. Sara will have to be unemployed and deemed disabled by a medical practitioner (Symington 1984, p.13). One out of four disabled people between fifteen and 64 years receives some type of pension or benefits (Ontario 1990, p.18). If Sara accepts the pension, she would receive substantial side benefits such as prescription drug costs and free wheelchair repairs (Standing Committee on Human Rights 1990, p.25). Still, her disposable income would be very low and would seriously constrain her housing, recreation and living options. According to Ontario statistics, many disabled people have very low incomes. Half the population identified as 'disabled' between the ages of fifteen and 64 have an income of less than \$10 000 per year (or about £5000 per year). (Ontario 1990, p.18)

Sara may not be better off if she finds employment. Disabled people with incomes of less than \$10 000 per year are just as likely to be in work as to be on benefits (Ontario 1990, p.18). Provincial programmes that try to work against the financial disincentives to trying full-time employment have not been particularly successful. The incentives are often not enough to outweigh the lost income and **lost side-benefits** of the relatively secure disability pension (Ontario Advisory Council for Disabled People (OACDP) 1990, p.90). Should the jobs not work out, the social assistance benefits can take considerable time to be reinstated. As a result, such programmes only provide

so much encouragement for people with disabilities to give up the security of their disability pensions.

Like Sara, Billy faces a possibly low future income. Hirst found that British young disabled people received £46 less a week (or approximately \$92), on average, than their nondisabled peers (Hirst 1990, pp.71-72). The 1989 Social and Community Planning Research (SCPR) survey found that the mean earnings for disabled men were £150-199 per month (or approximately \$300-400), compared to the 1989 New Earnings Survey's finding for all full-time male earnings, which was a median of £200-249 (or approximately \$400-500) (Prescott-Clarke 1990, p.87).

Billy could apply for income support and a disability premium if he was unemployed or not in the work force. Billy could also apply for the two new disability allowances. The Disability Living Allowance (DLA) aims to fund, at least partially, the care and mobility costs of a disability. Billy does not have to be unemployed to receive this benefit. The Disability Work Allowance (DWA) hopes to provide some financial security and incentive for unemployed disabled people to try employment.

The DWA is time-limited rather than a permanent benefit. Its success would depend, like the Ontario 'back to work' programmes, on employment being in the long run a better financial option for young people than income support. Given that people with disabilities can look forward to low-paying, low-advancement employment (Ward et al. 1991, p.27), the DWA may provide little financial encouragement for young people to try possibly insecure employment.

How likely Billy will be to take up these benefits is unknown. Martin (1988 p.23) reported that one quarter of people most disabled were not receiving the Attendance and Mobility Allowances (which DLA replaces). Such a gap was exceptionally large—considering the low income of, and extensive attendant and mobility costs for, many people categorised as this disabled. Of the people not receiving benefits, 45% reported not being aware of the existence of such benefits. This statistic was not dependent on how functionally disabled a person was: in other words, people with 'severe' disabilities, who would have been most likely to have successful benefit applications, were as likely as those with 'mild' disabilities not to have heard of the benefits. (Martin 1988, p.22)

Other possible sources of money for Billy would be the Social Fund or the Independent Living Fund (ILF). The Social Fund provides budgeting and

crisis loans and grants, from a fixed budget. Community Care grants are also available to help people with disabilities return to, or remain in, the community. (Glendinning & Hirst 1989, p.39-40) The ILF is a charitable trust helping people with 'severe' disabilities with the costs of employing domestic assistants or personal carers (Social Services Committee 1990, p.xv). The grants/ loans are paid at the discretion of the Social Fund and ILF officers respectively.

Should Billy apply to the Social Fund, the Social Fund officer considers the 'nature, extent and urgency' of Billy's need. This requirement could lead to invasive assessment. Furthermore, Billy must have exhausted all other potential forms of help to qualify for payment from the Social Fund and the process of applying to all other sponsors and voluntary organisations would be both humiliating and time-consuming. In addition, Billy would be most likely to receive a loan (70% of applicants do), Given his income prospects Billy is no more likely to be able to pay back the loan in the future than he is able to find that money in the present. (Walker 1989, p.194)

Both funds are cash-limited and Billy has no legal entitlement to the funds' moneys. This lack of entitlement lends itself to the criteria of the 'deserving poor', and Billy feels degraded at the idea of receiving 'charity'. (Walker 1989, pp.193-195)

Sara and Billy face a poor economic future. If they work, their income is likely to be lower than the rest of the working population, barely or completely failing to lift them from poverty—particularly if the extra costs of a disability are considered (Ontario 1990, pp.18-19; *Disabled News* August 1993). The benefits in both countries provide considerable disincentives for young people to leave the financial security of government income support, to try often financially precarious and financially disadvantageous employment. Later in life, as people without disabilities find jobs and begin to build up contributory insurance benefits, Billy's and Sara's benefits will remain stable and unable to provide true financial security—let alone true financial independence.

Employment

Even though the disability pension/ income support may be more financially secure and advantageous, Sara and Billy both desperately hope to find employment once they finish their education. To them, work is the logical

step following education. They would be proud to earn their own money. Sara met many co-workers when she went on work experience, and she expects that she will meet a whole new group of people and make some friends, when she goes to work. Billy quickly becomes bored when he spends much time at home, and he would like to find work that interests him and provides some structure to his day. Sara and Billy have been raised in societies that value employment, and having a job would help them feel that they were contributing and involved adult members of their communities.²

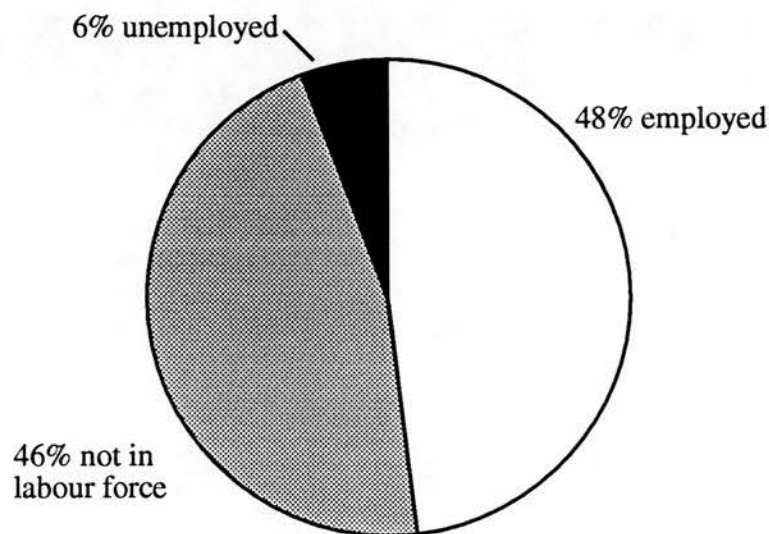
Leaving school, however, Sara faces an unpromising employment future. In 1986, less than one half of disabled people (between the ages of fifteen and 64) were employed, compared to three-quarters of non-disabled Ontarians. The more disabled the person, the less likely they were to be employed: while 36% of people labelled 'mildly disabled' had employment, only 24% of people labelled 'moderately disabled' and 10% of people labelled 'severely disabled' were employed. (Ontario 1990, p.15)

The 1984 Canada Health and Disability Survey found that 41% of the 'mildly disabled population' and 74% of the 'severely disabled population' were not in the labour force, i.e. they were not looking for jobs. The percentage of students was not so great as to explain these high statistics: only 22% of the 'nondisabled' population were identified as 'not in the labour force', and people without disabilities were statistically more likely to seek out higher education. A large number of disabled people appeared to have given up trying to find work. (See Diagram A, next page.)

The Ontario Advisory Council on Disability (OACDP) recently printed a report listing major obstacles to employment for disabled people. Amongst their list were inadequate education and training for people with disabilities, the lack of co-ordination of placement services, and government policies (such as the benefit system) that discouraged disabled people from pursuing employment opportunities. Obstacles to the work-place were noted, including the lack of physical access, transportation, independent living assistance, assistive devices, and employers' reluctance to fund work-place and job modifications. The OACDP listed attitudinal barriers, which assumed inability rather than ability, and the lack of awareness and understanding in programmes and policy that supposedly assisted job seekers: by disabled people themselves, employers, educators, union officials, and placement and

²For sources that support this viewpoint, see Coleman & Hendry 1990, pp.162 and 183; Tisdall 1990; and Ward et al. 1991, p.131.

Diagram A: Pictorial Representation of Ontario Disabled People's Employment



(Source: Ontario 1988)

community agencies. (1990 p.4) Considering the OACDP's formidable list, the employment future for many young people with disabilities does indeed seem bleak.

In the past, sheltered workshops might have been suggested to Sara as her employment solution. Sara emphatically feels, however, that sheltered workshops are heavily stigmatising. Such workshops have been increasingly criticised as work ghettos that *"only isolate and segregate workers with disabilities from the rest of the labour force"* (OACDP 1990, p.96). Government policies and support are moving away from segregated workshops to total work force integration. (OACDP 1990, pp.96-97)

In her search for employment, Sara will probably first visit the provincially-funded Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). Sara will be very much influenced by her experience with VRS. The service is the path to

many educational and employment opportunities and support: the service has the money to provide further training; and it funds trial work and education periods, and specific equipment/ modifications.

The OACDP strongly criticises the VRS on several fronts. First, many people with disabilities viewed VRS as replete with “*bureaucratic red tape*” (1990 p.31). Second, many people with disabilities felt that the VRS counsellors lacked vocational counselling training (a feeling also voiced by some counsellors), preoccupied themselves with assessments rather than working towards employment, and made decisions without the clients (1990 pp.32 and 34). Third, in most areas, waiting lists for VRS were so long that people with disabilities had to wait, unoccupied, for several months until their first appointment.

VRS deals only with ‘the employable’. After eighteen months, VRS could drop Sara from the case-load as ‘unemployable’. Sara might feel that she has little choice: to agree with VRS decisions or to accept a disability pension. Once dropped by VRS, Sara may very well abandon her aim of obtaining employment, and resign herself to life on her disability pension. (Tisdall 1990)

Actually, Sara does have other first-stop vocational service agencies. She could go to the generic Canadian Employment Centres (CECs). Unfortunately, at least 25% of CECs are physically inaccessible for people with mobility difficulties (OACDP 1990, p.38). Not all CEC counsellors have experience or training in working with disabled people. Even without an initial interview, a CEC counsellor may refer Sara to a specialised community agency. Many of these community agencies are under-staffed, under-trained and under-resourced. As OACDP points out, disabled people have no guarantee that these community agencies provide services equal to the CECs. (OACDP 1990, pp.39-40)

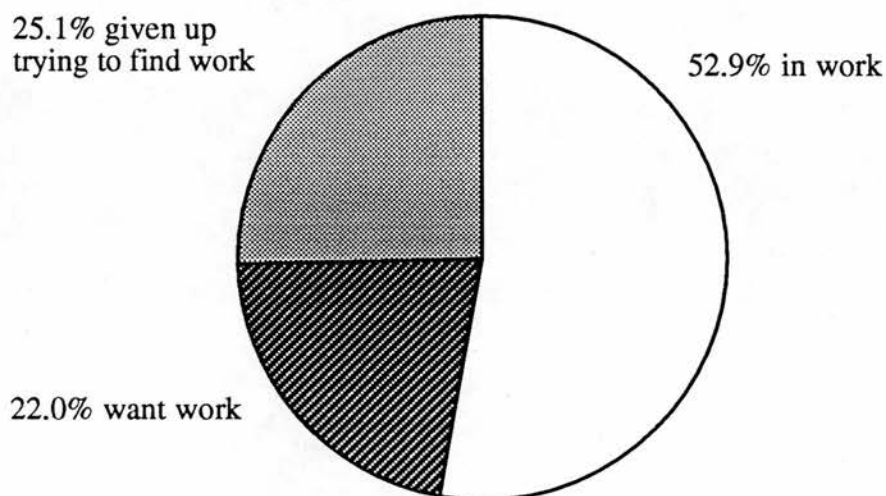
A variety of programmes do exist to train for, or funnel people towards, employment. Generic programmes such as the Canadian Jobs Strategy have special considerations for people with disabilities. A range of specialised programmes is also funded. FUTURES, for example, specifically assists ‘hard-to-employ’ young people to enter the work force. The Ministry of Skills Development will pay the young people a minimum wage for up to 26 weeks of on-the-job training. Unfortunately, in the programme’s attempts to encourage young people to participate, informal settings have been chosen that are physically inaccessible for Sara. (OACDP 1990, p.23).

Project Opportunity is an innovative, provincially-funded, programme. Sara would be aided in finding open employment; the employer would pay wages corresponding to Sara's productivity, and the programme tops up that amount until it reaches minimum wage (thus making employers more willing to employ a somewhat less productive worker, while ensuring that young people have a minimum income); and job counsellors would advise and support Sara in employment. (OACDP 1990, pp.100-102) OACDP fully supports this programme's approach. Sara, however, would be ineligible for Project Opportunity presently, because she has no labelled mental handicap. OACDP recommends that the programme expand its scope to people with other disabilities. (1990 p.100)

Employment equity legislation has been proposed in Ontario. Anti-discrimination legislation exists at national and provincial levels, and in Section 15 of the new Constitutional Charter. While this legislation has been fought for and welcomed by disabled people, the integration of disabled people into the work force has been minimal. Unless the employment reality alters (and considering the present Canadian recession, such alteration seems even more unlikely than in previous years), statistically less than half of the young disabled people leaving school will find employment. Should Sara find employment, the jobs may well be low-paying and entry-level, with few possibilities for promotion or advancement (Ontario 1990, p.16).

Once finished with his education, Billy will also enter a discouraging labour market marked by widespread and long-term unemployment. The 1989 European Community Labour Force Survey estimated the unemployment rate of disabled people, in Great Britain, at 20.5% compared to 5.4% for people without disabilities (Employment Department Group (EDG) 1990, p.13). Of the 3.8% of the British working age population considered economically active and occupationally disabled, 52.9% were in work as of September 1989 and 22% wanted work (EDG 1990, p.13). The remainder— 25.1%—had completely left the work force. (See Diagram B, next page.)

Diagram B: Pictorial Representation of British Disabled People's Employment



(Source: EDG 1990)

These statistics are backed by the smaller, more intensive survey done by Hirst in 1981. Only **two** people from Hirst's sample of 274 disabled young people went straight to work after leaving school. Of those in paid employment at the age of 21, 70% had experienced one or more time periods of being completely unoccupied. Eighty per cent of Hirst's cohort were completely unoccupied for one or more spells, between leaving school and reaching 21 years of age. (Hirst 1987, p.67) Thomson and Ward found in their 1993 survey that 11.7% of young people with physical disabilities were at home, with no other stated day time activity. Only ten young people were in open employment, of the 111 young people with physical disabilities for whom Thomson and Ward had updated information.³

The Quota Scheme aims to protect disabled people's employment. An employer is not allowed to dismiss a registered disabled employee without 'reasonable cause'. A quota is set at 3% of the workforce, and employers with

³The young people in Thomson and Ward's 1993 research were between the ages of 21.5 and 22.5 at the time of the survey.

over twenty employees must have 3% of their workforce filled by registered disabled people. For exceptions to be made, permits must be obtained from local Job Centres, stating that no person with disabilities is available to fill that job opening. (EDG 1990, pp.36-38)

The Quota Scheme has largely not been enforced, and very few employers have ever been penalised for failing to adhere to it. Disabled people have chosen not to register with the Scheme. Of those 'economically active and occupationally handicapped' people identified by the SCPR survey, only 13% claimed to be registered (Prescott-Clarke 1990, p.91). This number extrapolates to approximately 1% of the workforce registered in April 1990. Morell's research found that many disabled people already in work saw no advantage in being registered (1990 p.23).

A profusion of generic or specialised post-school provision has developed over the past decade, as a government response to both general youth unemployment and the unemployment of disabled people. When Billy leaves education, he will be referred to these programmes by the Careers Service (a division of the Education Department). A specialist careers officer would advise Billy, since he has a disability. The special careers officer should liaise with Billy before he leaves school, and could help Billy into his first employment or employment training course.

The special careers officer might direct Billy towards Youth Training (YT) (as of May 29, 1990 Youth Training has replaced the much criticised Youth Training Scheme). YT aims to serve all young people leaving schools and colleges and looking for their first period of training. Generally, YT provides young people with one or two years of skill training for a particular type of job. All people considered "*capable of eventually obtaining employment*" (Glendinning & Hirst 1989, p.21) can enter YT—an employability criterion that could exclude certain young people with disabilities. Significant controversy has raged around the YTS/ YT schemes, as being cosmetic camouflage for widespread youth unemployment. Roberts asks, "*School leavers have been offered new opportunities, but have their prospects improved? Or are their problems simply deferred?*" (1984 p.78) Young people with disabilities seem to benefit less from YT than people without disabilities. YouthAid reports on young people finishing two-year schemes in 1989/ 90. YouthAid found that 27.3% of people with disabilities versus 47.2% of people without disabilities obtained qualifications. Less than two-thirds of people with disabilities received training relating to a specific

occupation. After they left the scheme, 14.2% of all 1989/ 90 trainees went into unemployment. Over 30% of trainees with disabilities went into unemployment, after the same two years. (YouthAid 1991) In fact, Ward et al.'s 1991 research found only a few young people with physical disabilities attending YT courses, as their first post-school destination (seven of 118 people), and at the age of nineteen (six of 121 people).

Should Billy be deemed 'unemployable' by training programmes' standards, sheltered work programmes might be suggested to him. Such programmes have expanded considerably in the past decade—an average of 5.1% participant growth per annum (EDG 1990, p.54). The most expansion has been in the Sheltered Placement Scheme (SPS), where the local Job Centres find opportunities for disabled people within an integrated setting. Billy, however, would not be hired by the employer but sponsored by an organisation (local, voluntary or a sheltered workshop). Seyfried and Lambert feel this arrangement would create a wedge between Billy and his co-workers, highlighting that Billy is 'different' (1989 p.107). While the SPS scheme is still very new, a large majority of people (77%) surveyed by the SCPR in 1989 preferred such integrated government schemes to segregated programmes. The SPS programme does not seem to be widely accessed by school leavers: only one individual had been involved with the SPS in Ward et al.'s 1991 study.

Billy's other, more traditional, sheltered options are Remploy Ltd. and various sheltered workshops run by voluntary organisations and local councils. As pro-integration ideology gradually grows in Britain, segregated workshops have become viewed increasingly as stop-gaps instead of final destinations for disabled people. Sheltered placements, however, have served poorly as jumping boards to integrated employment. For example, in 1988/ 89 only 93 of Remploy's workforce—out of the 93 factories across the country—moved to open employment (EDG 1990, p.57). Perhaps the fault lies with the insufficient training component of the workshops; perhaps the conceptualisation of a continuum of segregated to open employment is unrealistic—the majority of people in the sheltered workshops may be best suited to that style of employment. However, SPS is a potential option that provides the benefits of integrated employment with the protection of a sheltered placement, and Billy would much prefer such work to a sheltered workshop.

Should Billy appear incapable of employment, open or sheltered, he might be sent to an Adult Training Centre (ATC) run by Colburne Region's Social Work Department. Some ATCs have special care units for people with physical disabilities; some authorities or voluntary organisations also run specialised Day Care Centres to cater for people with physical disabilities. These centres can provide art and leisure activities, combined with some skills-training. Often these two options are combined with training at Further Education (FE) colleges a number of days per week. (Glendinning & Hirst 1989, p.25) Thomson and Ward's 1993 research found ATCs to be the most common daily activity for young people with physical disabilities (42.3%), in their early twenties.

Neither Billy nor Sara faces a promising employment future. Unemployment has risen in both Scotland and Ontario over the past decade, and young people and disabled people have been particularly unable to find employment. Even though they may desperately want to work, Sara and Billy may follow the statistical pattern and either attend a local day care centre or stay at home, with no regular day-time activity at all.

Education

Today's labour market is perhaps unfairly focused on school qualifications. In their 1982/ 83 survey of British school leavers, Banks and Ullah found that young people's level of educational qualifications significantly predicted who went on to a job (p.82). Although a particular qualification is perhaps not the crucial factor to gaining employment, having a qualification does seem to be an entry ticket into the job market (OACDP 1990, pp.6-7).

In Ontario, the educational profile of disabled people is poor: 39% people with disabilities do not have high school degrees, as compared to 16% of adults without disabilities. Only 5% of people with disabilities have a university degree, compared with 12% of the general population. (Ontario 1988, p.9) In a job market that worships the Master's degree, the disabled population does not fare well. Hopefully, changes in educational law and practice may improve the educational profile. The Education (Amendment) Act 1980—typically referred to as Bill 82—is the present legislative foundation for Ontarian education; the Act (supposedly) guarantees Sara's right to education through the provincial system, whatever her disability.

Sara was guaranteed seven years of high school schooling in the provincial education system. Sara needed attendant care to function during the school day; the school system provided it. Equipment (including wheelchairs and computers) deemed necessary for education were 75% funded by the Ontario government (*Easter Sealer* 1989, p.6). In many ways, what Sara required, to be able to access her right to public education, has been provided.

Originally, the Act was perceived as also promising integration in schooling. In reality, the Act has not guaranteed absolute educational integration (Tisdall 1990), as not all young people are placed in 'mainstream' classrooms. The rhetoric towards integration, however, has had an effect. Now the idea of completely segregated schooling is largely not accepted in the Ontario system. While a few segregated independent schools remain, the Ontario education system has moved towards either integrated or semi-integrated schooling.

Local school boards convene Identification and Placement Review Committees (IPRCs), which decide whether the young people are 'exceptional' and what are the most appropriate educational placements and resourcing. Some educational authorities with larger populations have decided to fund semi-integrated units/ classrooms specially geared towards disabled students. In Sheldon, Sara has travelled across town to the Orthopaedic Unit at Dewar High School rather than attend her local school. Dewar School can provide Sara with on-site occupational therapy and physiotherapy, as well as additional educational expertise and support.

Dewar is a vocational high school, with basic education and vocational skill classes. The Orthopaedic Unit has its own administration, and life skills and academic classes. The work study programme aims to provide career exploration and employment preparation, where employers offer non-paying internships for the young people and the young people receive academic credit. Job offers, however, rarely result from such experiences. (Tisdall 1990)

When Sara was sent to Dewar School, certain educational avenues were almost completely closed. The Sheldon School Board streams its students into basic, general and advanced levels. Basic schooling supposedly leads to manual and technical jobs; general schooling prepares students for tertiary education such as community college; advanced schooling aims at advanced-level education such as universities. Dewar School offers basic and general levels. Sara's attendance at Dewar School therefore slants her career

choices towards manual and technical jobs or possibly attending community college.

Like Sara, Billy also receives particular schooling due to his disability. To gain access to this schooling, he went through a 'recording' process required by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended. Billy went through the extensive multi-professional assessment just before he started school. Billy's mother was included in the assessment and decision-making. By the end of the process, a 'Record of Special Educational Needs (SEN)' was produced for Billy, complete with a profile of his SEN, and recommendations on school placement, services and resources to meet those needs.

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended makes no absolute promise of educational integration even though the Warnock Report, on which the Act is based, made a strong plea for integration. In Scotland, a historical commitment to educating disabled people has resulted in an established array of segregated schooling. From their cohort of 618 pupils in Scotland with recorded special educational needs, Ward et al. (1991) found in Scotland that 87.4% of the 127 pupils with physical disabilities were placed in special, residential or hospital schools.

Billy was placed in Colburne Region's Robertson School. Specifically built to be physically accessible, Robertson School can offer Billy not only specialised teaching and assistance, but also on site therapy and medical treatment. The integration ideology has had some effect on placements, however. Formerly, people with physical disabilities in Colburne Region would almost automatically have attended Robertson School. Now, more young people with physical disabilities only attend their local schools (eight of eighteen people with physical disabilities only were placed in mainstream schools, in Ward et al.'s 1991 report). Robertson School's student profile has moved to include fewer people with physical disabilities only, and more people with physical disabilities **and** learning difficulties.

The Warnock Report places better employment preparation of students with SEN as one of its top three priorities. It suggested both work experience and further education for young disabled people. To this end, Billy will be going on two weeks of work experience this year, in an insurance office. He has already been on a 'Link Course' to the local Miller Further Education (FE) College for half a day each week. Through this link, he has participated in a variety of 'special needs' courses offered by the college.

When young people leave Colburne special and residential schools, FE college is the most common next step: 38% of these students leaving in 1989/ 90 went to FE colleges immediately following school. A much smaller percentage of students who did not attend special or residential schools—9%—went directly to FE colleges. Comparison of these statistics suggests FE colleges' increasing attention to providing education for disabled students. The statistics also show that FE colleges were not widely chosen by people from 'mainstream' schools. Instead, 42% of 1989/ 90 school leavers from 'mainstream' schools went straight into employment. Only 13% of students from special or residential schools went directly into employment. A very small percentage of students (1%) from special or residential schools went directly on to higher education when they left school in 1990, according to Colburne statistics. In contrast, 18% of students who had attended 'mainstream' schools continued on to higher education.

Table A: Destinations of Colburne Region School Leavers 1989/ 90

	Students leaving 'Mainstream' Schools	Students leaving Special or Residential Schools
Employment	42%	13%
Youth Training	24%	23%
Higher Education	18%	1%
Further Education	9%	38%
Unemployed	7%	8%
Centre for the Physically Handicapped	0%	2%
Adult Training Centre	0%	13%
Unavailable for work	0%	2%

(Source: Colburne** Regional Council, Careers Service)

** Note: 'Colburne' is the alias for the Region where the fieldwork took place

Billy does seem likely to emerge from the educational system less qualified than his nondisabled peers. The SCPR survey found that 32.2% of people without disabilities had no qualifications compared to 42% of employed people with disabilities and 59% of unemployed people with disabilities (EDG 1990, p.15). Given the expansion of FE colleges, perhaps

young disabled people will increasingly obtain qualifications to compete more equally on the labour market. Whether the labour market will consider these qualifications as matching those held by people without disabilities remains a question.

Statistics and research do not suggest that Billy's and Sara's education will necessarily lead to rewarding employment. Billy and Sara may very well be:

... left on the margins of the workforce, either unemployed or in jobs, schemes and courses with no guaranteed prospects ... these 'youth opportunities' are often waiting rooms where young people mark time. The wider society's solutions to their unemployment have now joined many school-leavers' problems. (Roberts 1984, p.5)

Further education—in Ontario's community colleges or Scotland's FE colleges—may only postpone the inevitable:

... how far is it realistic to pin faith indefinitely on further education. Perhaps it has to be accepted that a ceiling can be reached, beyond which renewed attempts simply postpone decisions about the future, and become dispiriting rather than hopeful. (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) 1985, p.10).

Education may be increasingly open to young people with disabilities. The educational system, however, has not yet proved itself a strong platform for young people to leap off into employment.

Living in The Community

Institutional living is no longer advocated for young people with disabilities. Instead, policy, services and disability advocates promote 'living in the community'. Financing has moved away from institutions and towards providing services and accommodation within local communities in both Scotland and Ontario.

Sara requires three things to move out of her mother's apartment. She needs an available, accessible unit; she needs the money to pay for the rent; and she requires some support in household chores and shopping. These three components cost considerable money and are in scarce supply.

The number of accessible, adapted units in Sheldon is overwhelmingly insufficient to meet the requests of disabled people in the area (DPCR 1991, p.14). Sara would find it difficult to pay for her phantom rental unit from her

disability pension if the government did not step in and subsidise her rent. Both the Ontario and federal government provide various supplements and accessible public housing to those people who are deemed to be financially in need. If Sara buys a house or an apartment, federal and provincial programmes could help her finance modifications to make the home accessible. At her predicted low income, however, the likelihood of Sara buying a house or apartment is small.

Various types of attendant care are available to Sara, but co-ordinating a package to meet her needs is difficult. The OACDP recently reviewed the Ontarian attendant care system, and listed an extensive host of problems. The care is provided only in the home, and cannot be 'ported' into the community or the work-place. The care is inflexible. If Sara requires more help one day than the next, she is unable to change the structure of her provided care. If Sara requires services between midnight and six in the morning, the support services are unavailable. Sara may have to co-ordinate a range of services to meet all her needs, because one programme is unlikely to provide all the necessary services. Employees of these services are low-waged and often ill-trained. Inevitably, therefore, the services have high turn-over rates. Disabled people may have to handle a constant influx of new employees to inform about personal needs, which is both inconvenient and undesirable. (OACDP 1988, pp.14-16)

In a recent initiative, the provincial government funds Support Service Living Units (SSLUs) run by non-profit community groups or agencies. This accommodation can be either private apartments or shared homes. Sara is a likely candidate for these SSLUs. She is capable of directing her own care; she needs assistance with her daily needs that cannot be met through other home support programmes; and she is able to have her medical needs met within the community. Again, support services are not available through this programme outside the home. (OACDP 1988, pp.17-18) Sara has put her name on the waiting list, but she is unsure when one would be available.

Sara is considering living in a group home specifically designed for people with disabilities. With the government's push for de-institutionalisation, group homes must house fewer than twelve permanent residents. Group homes can be organised as transitional or permanent. Transitional homes want their residents to move on once they have gone through a programme of life skills training. Sara could have chosen to apply to a transitional home and face a relatively short waiting list. Yet, in a year or

two, she would face lengthy waiting lists for an accessible apartment in Sheldon. Instead, a knowledgeable professional put Sara on the waiting list for a permanent group home at age sixteen, and now a space is available. Few residential homes exist in Sheldon for people with disabilities, and thus a place is difficult to come by. Sara would much prefer the autonomy of her own SSLU, but wonders if this permanent group home will be the only alternative to remaining with her mother.

As in Ontario, the supply of Scottish adapted accessible housing is far short of demand: a Church of Scotland survey indicated that the need was five times that of present provision (1988 p.29). Ward et al. found that out of their eleven case studies, six of the young people voiced a preference to live independently at some point in the future. Only one young person actually did live independently. (1991 p.103)

Billy could apply for a council house to rent, which could be adapted by the council if necessary. Ideally, Billy would like one of the houses specifically designed for wheelchair-users, since Billy uses his wheelchair constantly. Billy would receive a social work assessment (under Section 13 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986), as the social work department is required to assess recorded pupils leaving school. This assessment, complete with appeal rights, creates a legal responsibility for the Social Work Department to provide resources matching needs. The Section 13 would probably state Billy's need for home care. Care provision is means-tested; a charge may be made according to individuals' circumstances. Billy could apply to the Independent Living Fund for a grant. With this money, he could organise his own attendant care. (Glendinning & Hirst 1989, pp.65-67)

If Billy required more daily help or supervision, he could apply for sheltered housing where a resident warden oversees a group of flats or bungalows. Some housing associations also provide such sheltered housing, such as Cheshire Homes, Margaret Blackwood Housing Association and Red Cross (Scotland). Billy definitely does not wish to live in a residential home, although some of the other students at his school may go to live in these homes. To Billy, these homes are little better than institutional living. While they do provide a home for people, the residents' income support is paid directly into the home's funds and residents receive a very small allowance each week. Residents are constrained by the time scheduling of the home.

Billy would much prefer to control his own money and have more freedom of movement and timing.⁴

Even if Sara or Billy does manage to move away from home, their new residence could become a prison rather than a place of freedom if they cannot leave it due to lack of transport. Sara and Billy require transport to access their education, to go for a job interview, to commute to and from their potential work-places every day, and to participate in their communities. The OACDP's title of its 1987 publication eloquently speaks to transport's importance: *The freedom to move is life itself*.

Billy is unable to use the local public transport system with his friends who do not have disabilities. He cannot spontaneously phone up Dial-A-Ride, a door-to-door bus service, to take a trip to the centre of town and, if he did, his nondisabled friends could not come with him. Billy sometimes telephones a taxi but he carefully watches the number of taxi trips he makes, because the Colburne Regional Council's subsidies will last only for a certain number of trips each year. Sara has a parallel public transit system in Sheldon, but the system has limited hours and requires considerable forward planning on her part to make arrangements. She had found the service unreliable and time-consuming; sometimes she books the bus two hours before an appointment just to ensure she arrives on time. Both Sara and Billy, however, appreciate the transportation that they do have. They know people who live outside the cities who have even fewer options for transportation.

For Billy and Sara to feel truly part of their communities, they need to feel interconnected with other people in their communities. Anderson and Clarke (1982) interviewed English young people with disabilities before they left school and one year after they had left. They found that only 12% of people with disabilities saw their friends regularly outside work or college, although nearly half said they would like more contact. Around 40% reported seeing no friends outside work, college or day centre. Of the 60% who did see friends, the majority of friends were from school days rather than new ones. (p.236) As to more intimate relationships, Anderson and Clarke found that 61% of students with disabilities did want to marry and 16% reported that they probably wanted to marry (1982 p.96). One year after school, only one-third of the people who wished to have a boyfriend or a girlfriend were seeing somebody. (1982 p.237) Anderson's and Clarke's findings suggest that many

⁴Description based on discussions with three residents of a residential home in Colburne Region.

young people with disabilities find it difficult to make social connections post-school, even though they may very much wish to expand and enjoy such relationships.

In Ontario, statistics also paint a picture of isolation for some people with disabilities. Fifty-eight per cent of people with 'severe' disabilities reported friends or relatives visiting only one to four times a month and 22% more said that no friends or relatives visited. A substantial number of disabled people reported never attending sports events, plays, films, seminars, or religious services. (Ontario 1990, p.23)

Sara finds it difficult to move beyond people's immediate negative response to her wheelchair and disability. She does very much want to have an intimate relationship with somebody, but despite her efforts she has not found someone she likes who is also interested in her. Seeing an advertisement in the newspaper, she did try to join a dating service but she was refused because she uses a wheelchair. Just last week, a fellow student in the Orthopaedic Unit confided in Sara that she had been raped a year ago by a cousin; Sara now feels increasingly vulnerable herself. (Tisdall 1990)

Billy and Sara: Falling Through the Cracks

Sara and Billy both know what they want for their futures. They want to live in their own homes, no longer dependent on their parents. Billy wants to find someone to marry. Sara would like a long-term partner and is considering having children in the future. Although they are both eager to find employment, Sara plans to gain a community college diploma in computing skills and Billy a YT skill qualification so they will be better prepared for the labour market. They hope to find well-paying and rewarding jobs. They talk about going out to the local bar/ pub with friends and Sara particularly likes to go dancing. Both Sara and Billy are very hopeful about their futures, and at the same time concerned because they are leaving the security and planned lives of their schools.

Sara and Billy might be success stories. They may be able to achieve all or most of their goals. Research and surveys, however, suggest that Billy and Sara may find it extremely difficult to achieve what they presently want to do. What can be done to alter the statistics, and thus have more young people like Billy and Sara able to reach their goals?

Preparation and Planning

Opportunities for preparation and planning do exist for Sara and Billy to help them when they leave school. Sara could apply for the Educational-Vocational (EVs) Assessments held in the Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre; legislation requires Billy to go through a Future Needs Assessment (FNA) at Robertson School.

Ontario: Educational-Vocational (EVs) Assessments

While no provincial strategy has been legislated, local systems have developed. Sara could be referred to the Educational-Vocational (EVs) Assessments, developed by the Young Adult and Adolescent Team at the Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre (SRC).

The team has an inter-disciplinary approach, which asks for contributions from all team members to gain a holistic view of their clients⁵. The EV team members include:

- the doctor (who happens to be the team leader)
- the nurse clinician (who organises the team's programmes)
- the social worker
- the psychologist
- the recreationist (who works in the SRC's recreation department)
- the physiotherapist
- the occupational therapist
- the vocational liaison officer
- the clinical dietician
- the speech pathologist

Sara meets all the criteria for the EVs: she is over sixteen years old; she is in her last one or two years of high school; she has a physical disability; and she lives in the Sheldon area. A young person is typically referred to the assessment by the family doctor, an Easter Seal Society (ESS) Nurse⁶, the young person's school personnel or, if already a client at the SRC, by the team itself. Teachers at Dewar's Orthopaedic Unit would probably refer Sara. Should Sara not already be known to the team, she and her mother could come into the SRC clinic to meet the team doctor and the nurse clinician. At

⁵The following description is largely based on the nurse clinician's and team leader's descriptions of the EVs.

⁶The Easter Seal Society is a charitable organization that provides a comprehensive information and support service for parents of children with physical disabilities—and the young people—from birth to age eighteen.

that time, Sara's and her mother's expectations would be discussed and the assessment explained. Should both sides agree that an assessment would be useful, Sara would see the team's speech pathologist in advance. The speech pathologist would forward information about Sara to the other team members, so that the team members might be better able to communicate with Sara in the assessment week.

The nurse clinician organises the practical aspects of the assessment. Sara and her mother would have to sign consent forms so that educational information can be forwarded from the school to the team, and medical records accessed. Professionals active with Sara and her family would be contacted for information. The nurse clinician would send information about the assessment week to Sara and her family, and would spend considerable time explaining the process and what the EV could offer.

The actual assessments take place over a week within the SRC. Monday would begin with the nurse clinician meeting Sara and her mother, and quickly reviewing the practical aspects of the assessment week. Then the 'pre-conference' would be held, with team members (excluding the doctor), Sara and her parents, and a teacher from Dewar's Orthopaedic Unit. Introductions are made at these pre-conferences, specific assessment objectives of either the client or the referring teacher outlined, and an opportunity to ask any questions given. Often, the team members will ask the school teacher for additional information on educational/ work experience.

The pre-conference formally begins the assessment week. Sara would be an 'out-patient' and come and go from the SRC. If she had lived outside Sheldon, she could be an 'in-patient' and stay at the SRC for the week. A schedule of team members' assessments structures the rest of the week (see Appendix B). These assessments include: occupational therapy, physiotherapy, social work, recreation, psychology, and vocational, with the options of nutrition and nursing⁷. The EV assessments explore a range of issues, considering not only how young people will spend their post-school days, but such aspects as where young people could find accessible housing, what benefits they could apply for, and how to improve their mobility.

At least two weeks after this initial assessment week, a 'post-conference' is held. A room is reserved within the SRC: most often, a large conference room at the end of a winding corridor. Almost always, the

⁷Note that communications are assessed prior to the assessment week, and the doctor does not assess the young person.

conference is held around tables arranged in either a rectangle or T-shape. This conference is chaired by the team leader, the doctor. First, the team members and referring people meet (the 'team meeting'); each team member would report on Sara's assessment with the team member, and make recommendations. The group would discuss these results and the doctor would work towards creating a summary of the assessment week and of the recommendations. Any concerns about approaching Sara and her mother with the findings and recommendations would be explored. The team meeting usually takes approximately forty-five minutes. Then, Sara and her mother would be invited into the meeting, and the process largely repeated (the 'full meeting'). In total, the two-part conference typically lasts one and a half to two hours.

The team leader takes notes throughout the team meeting. These notes would become the basis of the recommendation summary sent out to Sara. All the individual team member reports, complete with their own specific recommendations, would also be available to young people and parents through a consultation with the individual team member. Sara and her mother would be encouraged to telephone individual team members with any questions or concerns and welcomed to make separate appointments to discuss individual reports. This package (or parts thereof) would be sent to whomever Sara has given consent to receive it: for example, the school or the VRS.

Certain recommendations might involve follow-up by the team members. For example, the recreationist could have promised to pass on information concerning accessible swimming pools. The social worker might have recommended family therapy. The dietician might have arranged a follow-up appointment on weight-control. About four months after the post-conference, Sara and her mother would be invited into the clinic. They would meet the doctor and the nurse clinician to discuss which recommendations had been acted on, and to investigate why certain recommendations had not been successful or followed-up.

Scotland: Future Needs Assessments (FNAs)

Statutory requirements encircle Scotland's preparation and planning process. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended is not only concerned with the educational resourcing of young people with 'special educational needs', but also with what happens to the young people **after**

they leave the educational system. The Act requires a 'Future Needs Assessment':

It shall be the duty of an education authority... to consider in relation to each recorded child ... what provision would benefit him after he ceases to be of school age and to make a report thereon. (Section 65B—(1))

The legislation requires that the FNA take place two years before the young person can legally leave school. Local Education Authority guidelines further specify the framework of meetings, assessments and reports to fulfil this statutory requirement.

Further legal duties were laid down within the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986. Before an education authority makes its report (Section 65B (1)), the social work department must give an opinion on whether the young person is 'disabled'. This opinion should be noted in the young person's Record of Needs and in the report. If the social work department does consider the young person to be 'disabled', the department must make

... an assessment of the needs of the child or young person with respect to the provision by the authority of any statutory services for that person ... and make a report thereon (Part III, Section 13—(4))

The report is commonly known as the 'Section 13' report.

In practice, the FNA process began shortly after Billy turned fourteen, since he had the right to leave school at age sixteen. Robertson School's headteacher instigated the process and chaired FNA meetings; the meetings were under the jurisdiction of the Area Principal Educational Psychologist. The FNA meetings were held within the school.⁸

The first meeting (FNA1) was an opportunity for various service departments (Careers Service, Social Work Department) and FE college (such as Miller College in Colburne Region) representatives to gain background information about Billy. Attendees at Billy's FNA1 meeting were:

Billy
Billy's mother
the headteacher
the teacher with the careers' remit in Robertson school

⁸The following description of FNA meetings is largely based on explanations by Robertson School's headteacher, supplemented by Colburne Education Authority guidelines in use at the time of research. Colburne Regional guidelines have since been updated.

the school doctor
a senior Community Medical Officer
a divisional educational psychologist
a specialist careers officer
a social worker from the regional headquarters
a representative from Miller FE College

Any other professionals particularly involved with Billy, such as the family's social worker, could also have attended. Including young people and their parents in all FNA meetings was a new practice at Robertson School, and by no means a widespread practice throughout Colburne Region.⁹

Since Robertson is almost completely attended by recorded students, many young people required FNA meetings at the same time. Because so many professionals had to be brought together for each meeting, all the meetings were typically held in one day. The day's schedule was usually based around localities, so that, for example, the divisional psychologist could attend all three meetings on her/ his case-load, and then leave. Because so many meetings needed to be held in one day, meetings were usually scheduled for ten to twenty minutes. Billy and his parents were sent a letter inviting them to their meeting (the time being already set), and they waited outside Robertson School's meeting room until their turn came.

Between Billy's first and second FNA meetings, assessments were made by the school doctor, the specialist careers officer, the educational psychologist and a social worker. The school doctor wrote an updated medical report; the specialist careers officer talked to both Billy and his parents about Billy's interests, potential post-school options and finances; the educational psychologist tested Billy and interviewed Billy and his family. The educational psychologist formally asked the social work department to carry out the Section 13 assessment. This Section 13 assessment involved interviews with, and observation of, Billy and his family. All assessment summaries should have been distributed to all professional participants, before the FNA2 meeting; along with Billy's school record, these assessments were to be the starting point for the FNA2 meeting.

If Billy was considered eligible for social work resources (resources that include Adult Training Centres, independent living options and recreational activities) through the Section 13 assessment, an area team social worker would have been assigned to Billy. This case social worker should then have

⁹The new Colburne guidelines require parental invitations for all the meetings, and suggest young people's inclusion starting at the FNA2 meeting, if at all appropriate.

attended the FNA meetings from FNA2 onwards. In fact, the Section 13 assessment and report were not completed, and no social worker was ever assigned.

The FNA2 meeting was supposed to make decisions. According to the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended, Section 65B—(5), two decisions must result from the FNA process: whether a young person's Record of Needs will remain open after s/he reaches the age of sixteen; and whether the young person would benefit from continued educational provision after the age of sixteen. The continued educational provision would most likely be remaining at school, changing to another school setting, or continuing on to FE college. In Thomson and Ward's 1993 research, staying at school was the FNA suggestion for 61.5% of the young people with physical disabilities; no recommendations were made suggesting another school; and FE college was recommended to 6.4% of young people.

The educational psychologist drew up a decision summary after Billy's FNA2 meeting. The psychologist then sent out a memo to the Regional Psychologist, and the Regional Psychologist then sent a letter to Billy's parents, outlining the professionals' recommendations for Billy. Billy's parents were invited to respond in fourteen days if they disagreed with the decisions. The written decisions were general enough that Billy's mother saw no need to debate them.

The FNA3 meeting was not required by the process, but Robertson School staff considered such reviews good practice. In fact, a FNA review was held every year until now Billy is ready to leave school. Billy has had five FNA meetings. At each FNA review, Billy's progress and future plans were reviewed, and any practical concerns were addressed. Nothing was formally written down from these FNA3 meetings.

- *Evaluation of FNAs*

How useful will the FNA meetings' decisions be for Billy? Thomson and Ward have followed a cohort of young disabled people through the recording process and their FNAs, into their post-school lives. From Thomson and Ward's 1993 work, the formal decision recorded after the FNA2 meetings can be compared with the young people's occupations immediately post-school and at the age of 21.5-22.5 years.

Two in-depth evaluations of FNAs have recently been completed. Mary Hubbard followed a cohort of young people with multiple disabilities, through and slightly beyond the FNA process, for her Ph.D. thesis. In April 1991, Gail Kennedy (social worker) and Shirley Wassell (educational psychologist) published a report on Colgate¹⁰ Region's FNAs, and Scottish Local Authorities' FNAs in general. Both of these in-depth studies made very similar conclusions: while the FNA process was supported in theory, the practice needed considerable improvement.

Ward et al. (1991) and Thomson & Ward (1993)¹¹

The FNA proposed provision for the majority of young people (with physical disabilities) was to stay at school (77 of 118 people, or 65.3%). Other proposals were much less common: ATCs for 10.2% young people; FE colleges for 6.8%; and 11.0% young people had more than one option (the options were not specified in the research). Note that open employment was never recorded as a FNA decision.

Most young people stayed at school after they turned sixteen—71.0% or 88 of 124 young people with physical (and other) disabilities. Fewer young people went to ATCs than FNA decisions had suggested (6.5% of young people, versus 10.2% for whom ATCs were FNA decisions). Slightly more young people went to FE Colleges than had been suggested in the FNAs (8.1%, versus 6.8%). A few young people were at home (6.5%) with no other stated day-time activity.

By the age of nineteen, ATCs were the most common placement for the 118 young people with physical disabilities (33.9%). None of the young people at ATCs had only physical disabilities: all had physical and other disabilities. Young people with only physical disabilities were distributed across FE Colleges (5 young people), YT (3 young people), higher education (2 young people), staying at home (3 young people) and 4 young people were still at school. One young person with only physical disabilities was in open employment. Some young people with multiple disabilities, including a

¹⁰Note that 'Colgate' is an alias for the Region in which Kennedy and Wassell did their fieldwork.

¹¹Note that the population numbers slightly change from topic to topic, depending on number of participants within that research section.

physical disability, were at FE College (16 of 100) or at home (15 of 100). One young person of these 100 with multiple disabilities was in open employment.

Thomson and Ward's 1993 research sought to follow-up the 618 young people of their 1991 research, to discover the young people's placements in their early twenties. Of interest to my research, their 1993 research gathered up-dated information on 111 young people with physical (and other) disabilities from their 1991 research. A large minority of the young people with physical and other disabilities were attending ATCs (42.3%). (None of the young people attending ATCs had only physical disabilities.) Thirteen young people (11.7%) with physical (and other) disabilities were 'not seeking work', with no other stated day-time activity. Other day-time occupations included sheltered employment (5 young people), special work training (6 young people) and 10 young people were in full-time open employment.

What do these statistics suggest? I perceived that young people tended to follow the decisions made at the FNA meetings, with three slight variations: slightly more young people attended FE Colleges or stayed at school than was suggested at FNAs; and slightly less young people attended ATCs than was suggested. Whether or not the FNA decisions provided substantial help to the young people in planning their post-school lives, or helping them reach their goals, could not be concluded from the data. Certainly, if the young people wished to be employed, few went on to employment after school or even after further training.

Hubbard (1992)

Hubbard perceived a contradiction in the FNA meetings between

... professional and bureaucratic decision-making on the one hand and user-led enabling and empowerment philosophies on the other ... (p.178)

She concluded that professional and bureaucratic considerations dominated the meetings, by focusing on present progress in school and post-school placement, rather than the personal development and future services needs of the individual young people (p.97).

In interviews, Hubbard found that carers were increasingly dissatisfied with their FNA meetings as they proceeded through the process (p.120).

Carers felt unable to participate within the meetings for a variety of reasons: the intimidating number of professionals at the meetings; the carers' own lack of knowledge on post-school placements and professionals' roles; and confusion caused by terminology (pp.111-114). Young people in Hubbard's study did not regularly attend FNA meetings.

Both Hubbard and certain carers particularly criticised the Local Authority Social Workers attending the meetings. Such social workers were perceived as lacking experience of the FNA process and of young people with multiple disabilities generally, of failing to know the individual young people personally, and of not carrying out their duties following the FNA meetings. Rivalries between Local Authority Social Workers and other professionals, as well as between such Social Workers and carers, developed within some meetings and thus distracted attention from the young people's post-school needs. (p.93 and pp.112-113)

These and other related findings were the basis for Hubbard's substantial list of recommendations, on FNA procedures. These recommendations included:

1. Official recognition should be given to the FNA process post-sixteen, as most young people were leaving school at eighteen plus. The process should be dedicated from the beginning to considering the individual young person's post-school needs and appropriate provision, and not wait until the final FNA meetings to consider such matters.
2. All professionals participating in the meetings should be informed about the individual young people, their personal and social developmental needs and different types of available provision. Professionals should co-operate more closely together.
3. The meetings should follow a set agenda that should be forwarded to all participants before the meetings. The meetings' stress should be on identifying individual young people's post-school needs and not post-school provision.
4. Young people and carers must be well-supported and informed, in order to play a more prominent and involved role within the FNA process.
5. Records should be transferred on young people's individual personal and social development needs, from school to post-school placements.
6. The range and number of post-school placements should be expanded so young people have greater choice.

(based on pp.198-202)

Overall, Hubbard identified a key deficit of present practice: the post-school planning was 'service-led' rather than 'user-led' (p.207).

Kennedy and Wassell (1991)

In their study, Kennedy and Wassell found minimal collaboration between social work and education departments for the FNAs. Professionals rarely remained constant before, during and after the process. Social work staff who attended and contributed to the meetings were seldom the local staff who provided the services. Educational psychologists who often had no contact with the young people (or their parents) since the young people's recording—two or three years previously—resurrected their relationship for the FNAs and generally felt that these assessments ended their roles with the young people and their parents. Thus staffing was discontinuous while the FNAs were supposed to be ensuring connections between, and continuity of, services and provision. (p.28)

Parents in Colgate Region's FNAs wrote reports for the meetings, and young people and parents were circulated with all professional reports, as were all professionals, before the meetings. Parental attendance at the meetings was high.¹² In Kennedy and Wassell's research, some educational psychologists reported that young people were not skilled enough to make realistic choices, nor to be part of meaningful discussions, even though the young people were always consulted about their future plans. (p.28)

Kennedy and Wassell discovered that none of the professional agencies were assessing young people's vocational skills and strengths (p.29). Educational psychologists officially said they assessed five areas: social skills; independence level; life skills; educational progress; and leisure. In reviewing actual psychological reports, psychologists typically reported only on social skills and educational progress. Rarely were formal assessments carried out. Psychologists often wondered what contribution they were making to the assessments, as what they covered was also commonly covered in social work department reports. (p.29)

Reports generally tended to be descriptive and *"too subjective to translate into meaningful programmes for the young person"* (p.29). Several psychologists told Kennedy and Wassell in interviews that the whole FNA

¹²Compared to Kennedy's and Wassell's survey, Thomson et al.'s survey found more dissatisfaction by some professionals, and parents, of parental inclusion in the meetings (1991 p.84).

process was, for the most part, a bureaucratic exercise that did not justify the investment of professional time in assessment (pp.29-30). Aims and purposes of the FNA process were unclear (p.30).

Conclusion

In both Scotland and Ontario, governments, professionals, parents and young people are increasingly aware and vocal about the difficulties many young people with disabilities face post-school. When they leave school, many young people confront obstacles blocking their paths and little support from adult services. Ontario adult services are reported as being confusing, inadequate and uncoordinated:

Most children with disabilities receive comprehensive services until the age of 18 or 19 or until secondary school leaving age which may be 20-21 years. Legally, children become adults at the age of 18. At this time, a number of vocational services, training programs, post secondary education, and transitional living environments are available, but each has specific eligibility criteria, and information about them may be difficult to obtain. Young adults and their families are describing a sense of being 'cast adrift' without an appropriate map. Social workers and other community professionals are also expressing frustration about the need for flexible and appropriate programs and services. (DPCR 1991, p.1)

Similarly, McGinty and Fish write about British services:

Many contributors to transition in education, health and social services and voluntary organisations currently work in isolation from each other. Continuity between phases of education and between child and adult health services is limited and the effective co-ordination of effort between the different sectors of national and local government difficult to find. Above all young people and their families face a lack of coherent information, uncertain choices—which vary according to where they live—and little certainty about their entitlement to education, training and support as they leave school. (1992 p.4)

The EVs and FNAs were specifically established to help young disabled people prepare to leave school, to bring together pertinent professionals to ensure that young people were **not** 'cast adrift' and that adult services were not discontinuous with child services. How well do these assessments prepare young people like Billy and Sara for when they leave school? How well do the assessments plan for young people's post-school lives?

The EVs have to date not been extensively evaluated. Two recent in-depth evaluations of FNA meetings, however, made condemning critiques of FNAs' practice. Hubbard accused the FNA meetings of being 'service-led' by professional and bureaucratic requirements, and thus failing to provide a 'user-led', "*independent/ enabling/ empowering model*" (1992 p.ii). Does Hubbard's accusation hold for other FNA meetings out-with her fieldwork? Do the EV meetings provide a professional/ bureaucratic model or an independent/ empowering one? Kennedy and Wassell particularly criticise the lack of agreement on the concept of transition, and what the objectives should be during the FNAs (1991 p.32). They conclude their report with Fish's exhortation:

'Not having agreed aims for transition is inexcusable. Even if it is not easy to coordinate contributions, there is no excuse for agencies not to work towards common ends. This is an issue which can be tackled and to which young people, their parents and professionals can contribute!' (Fish 1990)

The FNAs may be clear about what they are working **against**, but without a clear concept of what they are working **towards**, Kennedy and Wassell suggest that FNAs cannot substantially contribute to young people's transition from school. Do FNAs and their counterparts in Ontario, the EVs, lack clear transitional goals?

CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF TRANSITION

In the 1980's, the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), a branch of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), carried out a ten year study of young people's transition from school to adulthood. In their concluding publication, CERI asks: "*One of the first questions to ask about transition is transition to what?*" (1991 p.9) The answer to this question is constantly debated within the literature on young disabled people's transition from school. Little consensus exists on the exact criteria for successful transition and even broad categories are controversial: should the transition be from school to employment? to community integration? to 'adulthood'?

The following discussion considers models that are representative of both the extensive literature on transition and the different directions taken within this literature. By considering these examples in some detail, how transition is modelled in the special needs literature can be considered and questioned.

Transitional Models

The reports from CERI make a distinction between the phase and process aspects of transition:

The 'process' aspect refers to the psycho-sociological development of the individual whereas the 'phase' aspect refers to the pattern of services provided for individuals during transition. (1986 p.15)

Both the phases and the processes of transition are sites of problem-setting and debate in the transition literature. Two phase models will be discussed here —those of CERI and Corbett (1989)—and two lists of processes—those of CERI and Ward et al. (1991).

The 1991 CERI report divides transition into three states:

1. *The final years of schooling;*
2. *Further Education and vocational preparation; and*
3. *Entry into work and adult life. (p.9)*

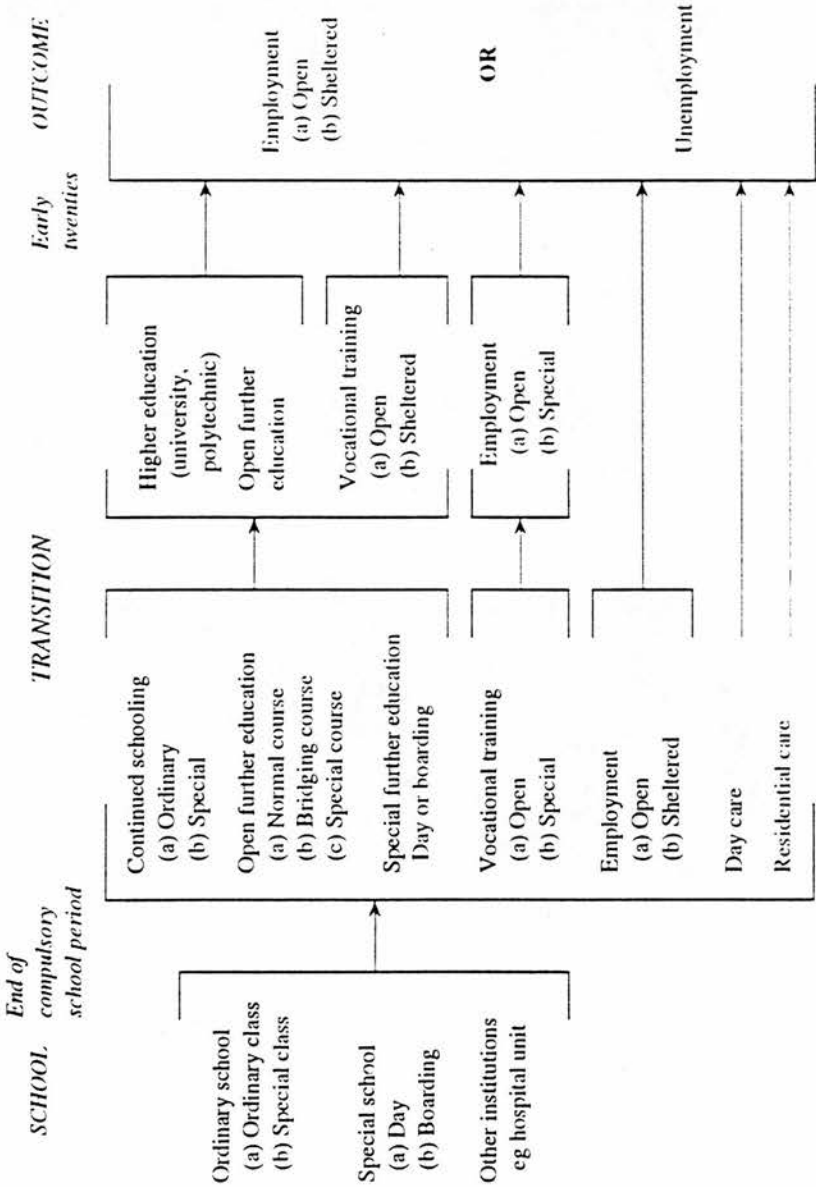
These three transitional states imply a stage-wise, practical progression of transition. (See Diagram C, next page.) Generally, however, the practical elements are justified for psycho-social reasons (valuing employment as a vehicle for identity construction, for example). While these states are not **required** steps of transition, they are stages through which **most** young people travel and which help the young people, not only technically to achieve adult status, but psychologically to become adults.

Corbett's transitional model resembles a wheel, rather than a linear progression. In the centre of the wheel lies the English educational system with its various schooling placements: mainstream classrooms, special schools, sixth form colleges, etc. Around the circumference of the wheel are various post-school outcomes, including open employment, staying at home, special and workshop Youth Training Schemes, and various day centres. Arrows connect certain school placements with various outcomes, sometimes travelling through certain 'transitional arrangements' (such as special and employer-based Youth Training Schemes) before continuing on to an outcome. Open employment is not found, in Corbett's model, at the end of any arrow going through the various transitional arrangements. Rather, open employment typically stems from sixth form colleges or Technical, Vocational and Educational Initiative (TVEI) Schemes. (See Diagram D, page 42.)

Both these models find transition problematic for young disabled people. For the CERI model, paid employment is postponed indefinitely as the young people are placed time and time again into various work training programmes. For Corbett's model, paid employment is a result of only two specific educational placements, and many young people with disabilities do not start in either of these two placements. These young people therefore do not usually enter open employment. Alternative solutions, writes Corbett, are at this time insufficient and lack status.

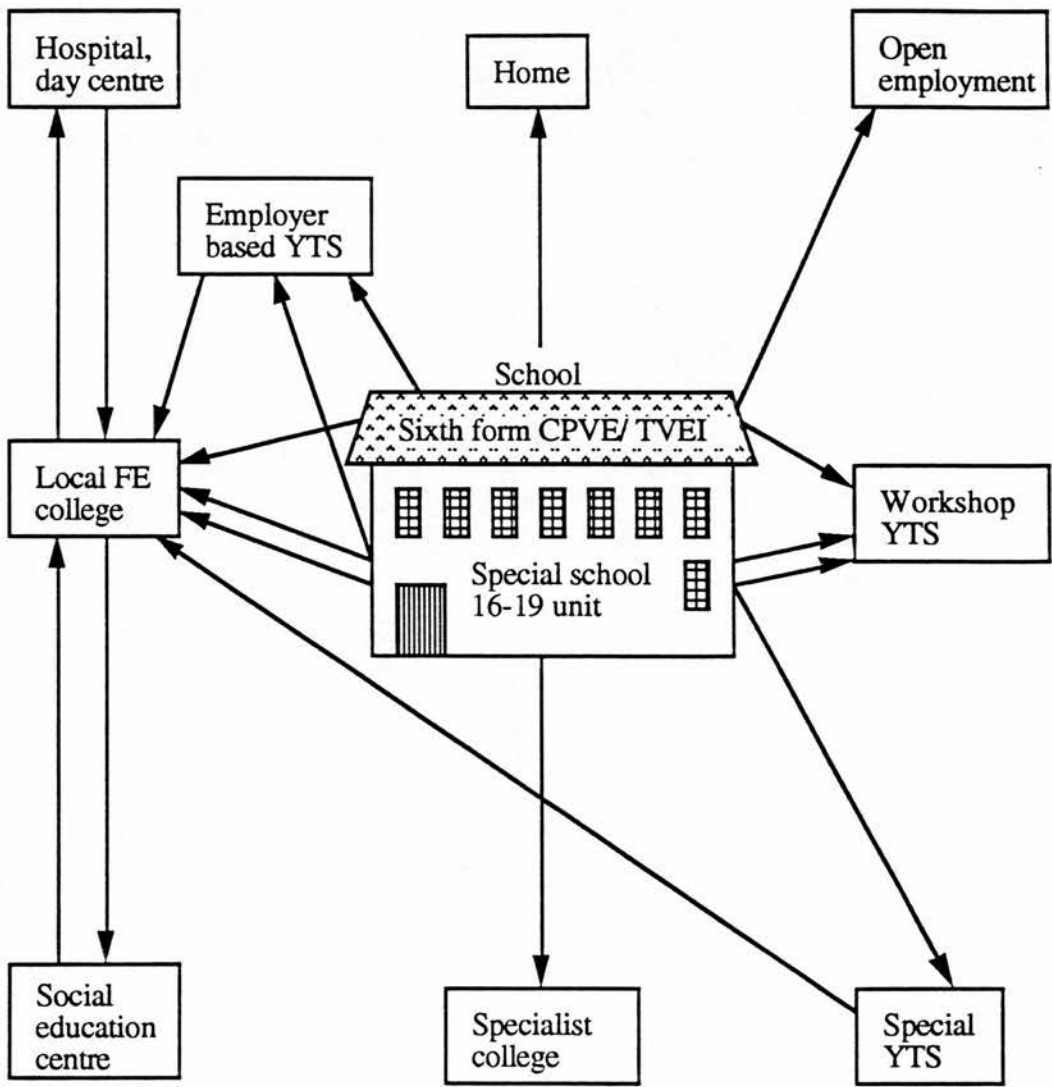
Each model implies different solutions for the young people's lack of open employment opportunities. Prolonged work training masks limited employment opportunities, according to the CERI model. CERI's solutions therefore require expanded employment opportunities for young people with disabilities; indeed, its 1983 report uses case studies to explore various options. Corbett's model logically leads to three choices: people with disabilities need to attend sixth form colleges or TVEI Schemes; or the goal of open employment should not be advocated and alternatives emphasised; or new phases must be created so that arrows **do** connect other school

Diagram C: Three Transitional States Post-School
—The Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) Model



(Source: CERI 1983)

Diagram D: Corbett's Pictorial Description of Main Opportunities for School Leavers with Special Needs, 1988



(Based on: Corbett 1989)

placements with open employment. In 1992, Corbett collaborated with Barton to promote Further Education colleges as just such a possible linking phase.

The choice between these two, or any other, models of transition could be decided by which model more closely matches reality. Does a linear path most adequately describe the transitional lives of young people with disabilities? Or does a wheel of outcomes connected to a centre of educational placements better match what young people find once they leave school? Such questions can be answered though quantitative and qualitative studies with young people with disabilities. Ward et al. conclude that the CERI model best matches their cohort's post-school pattern (1991); Michael Hirst also reports using the CERI model to frame his data.

CERI's list of processes includes both practical goals (e.g. productive activity) and more psycho-social goals (e.g. personal autonomy). The 1991 CERI report summarises them as such:

1. *Personal autonomy, independence and adult status;*
2. *Productive activity;*
3. *Social interaction, community participation, recreational and leisure activities;*
4. *Roles within the family.* (p.137)

These criteria are abstract and require further breakdown. For example, the term 'independence' can mean several different things for someone with a physical disability. Does CERI advocate physical independence: one's own home? being able to do day to day tasks for oneself? Or does the report mean psychological independence: feeling in control of one's life? With CERI's term 'independence' in its present imprecision, knowing when a person achieves independence is difficult to ascertain. Most, if not all, of the report's criteria listed above beg further delineation to give the criteria practical meaning.

In contrast to CERI's abstractions, Ward et al. gather a more practical list of transitional 'milestones', summarising conclusions made in a range of literature and through the team's research:

These were the legal aspects of adult status, such as the right to vote, to marry, to receive welfare benefits, to pay Income Tax, to attend jury service, if eligible and summoned; the role of employment as a key determinant of adulthood, in terms of the opportunities it afforded for living independently of family support and outwith the family home, and the ability to sustain adult relationships. (1991 p.130)

Attainment of (most of) these criteria is easier to judge. For example, a young person is either living outside the family home, or s/he is not; s/he either has the right to vote or s/he does not. But in return for their very precision, some people would more openly disagree with these criteria, finding them too exclusive or inclusive (why is community participation not included?) or unrealistic (many young people, let alone young disabled people, cannot find permanent employment in the present conditions of widespread unemployment). However, Ward et al. expand their list (and their work does remain in progress), others may or may not agree; any disagreements with their criteria reflect the debates within the 'transitional field'.

Which list is a more suitable base for the conceptualisation of transition? The abstract list of CERI's 1991 report captures more of the psycho-social elements of adulthood. Working for a wage, for example, is not advocated but 'productive activity'; marriage is not suggested but 'social interaction'. The list's criteria are justified, in the 1988 CERI publication, by a psycho-sociological concept of adolescence:

Ideally then, adolescence is a period when new roles are taken on, one's self-image, after some turmoil and conflict, is consolidated, independence and autonomy from one's parents are gained (after considerable battle in many cases) and one is ready, with the support of one's peers, to envisage entry into adult life. (p.22)

This psycho-sociological approach emphasises roles and role conflict, social expectations, and the interaction between these roles/ expectations and the adolescent's sense of identity.

Psycho-sociological justifications have certain advantages over Ward et al.'s more practical list. Such justifications could be used to criticise and challenge the status quo facing each adolescent. The justifications could be universalised across cultures more easily (although perhaps not correctly, as the concepts may be unavoidably ethnocentric), which is especially pertinent as societies become increasingly multi-cultural. The justifications could be used as societies change: employment, for example, may become less important but developing a sense of identity through adult roles may still be valued.

While CERI's model shares in the benefits of the adolescence concept, at the same time, the model shares the concept's deficiencies. First, adolescence is defined as a time of crisis by the psychological and sociological literature (Anderson & Clarke 1982, p.32; Coleman & Hendry 1990, p.12; McGinty & Fish 1992, p.i). According to the psycho-sociological approach,

adolescence is marked by the upsurge of instincts at puberty and the inadequacies of psychological defences. These two factors may lead to a vulnerability of personality and maladapted behaviour, respectively (Coleman & Hendry 1990, p.6). The psycho-sociological approach emphasises the stresses and tensions caused by external pressures on the adolescent (Coleman & Hendry 1990, p.12), seriously threatening the smooth path to an adult identity.

Although the theory of adolescence defines itself by crisis, the reality does not reflect this definition of adolescence. First, only a few young people experience a severe identity crisis (Anderson & Clarke 1982, p.32; Coleman & Hendry 1990, p.201). This false association between adolescence and crisis could lead to complacency. Professionals could de-value crises that their clients are going through as 'inevitable' and 'just part of that age group', rather than recognising the crises as preventable and significant.

Second, the concept focuses on the individual. If young people have a crisis, they have one because of either internal over-abundance and deficiencies, or external pressures on their fragile identity formation:

... failure to cope effectively with the challenges of adolescence may represent deficiencies in the individual's self-concept which will have negative consequences for subsequent development. (Coleman & Hendry 1990, p.82)

The problem, according to this individualised model, lies with the adolescents. As Davies suggests, such a deficiency model of young people emphasises: "*... the flaws and weaknesses of individuals and by definition of youth itself*" (1986 p.131). Solutions to the 'problem' of transition are then oriented towards limited social engineering via improved professional service provision. Radical remodelling of societal opportunities and structure is not considered (Davies 1986, p.130).

Third, adolescence has a negative status. Because adolescence is a time of preparation and training, and because it is a time of potential personal crisis, adolescents have low status and low power compared to adults. Adults therefore may give little respect and control to adolescents. For young disabled people, this lack of respect adds to the problems of 'professionalism' (as defined by Fulcher 1989) and societal stigmatisation due to their disability. 'Professionalism' (to be separated from the actions of individual professionals) creates its power by demeaning lay people's knowledge in favour of professionals' knowledge base. Professionalism can lead to parentalistic

decisions and lay people's passive acceptance of these decisions, as they feel unable to disagree with professionals' technical knowledge. (Fulcher 1989, p.261) Stigmatisation of young people because of their disabilities also gives them a negative/ deviant status. The young people are then considered inferior and unwelcome in society. (Goffman 1974) Young people with disabilities thus may have three negative statuses attributed to them when they face transitional services: of being crisis-ridden adolescents, of being needy clients, and of being marginalised members of society. The young people, as a result, may be treated with little respect and given little control in transitional decisions.¹ Certainly, the CERI reports rarely quote young people's views on transition, instead depending on professional and government views, and experts' reports.

Ward et al.'s model does reference young people's views on transition. (Although within the interview schedules, only professionals are asked **directly** to define adult status. Young people's and their parents/ carers' definition must be **inferred** from a question asking them to talk about the young people's futures.) The model's practical list may be more useful than CERI's psycho-sociological approach, for practical problem-solving and for judging 'success' or 'failure'. More importantly, these criteria are seen by most of society—not by the academics, not by the professionals, but by everyday people—as the markers of adulthood. People with disabilities are encouraged to be 'just like everybody else'; they are encouraged to 'integrate' and to 'participate'² in the everyday sphere, not the academic or professional spheres. For example, encouraging a young person to view voluntary work as equally valuable as paid employment —when general society does not consider such work equal—contradicts the encouragement to be 'just like everybody else'. As CERI suggests:

Those with handicaps have difficulties enough in achieving an acceptable place in society and certainly they, and the voluntary organisations who speak for them, are in no doubt that useful work should be the object of transition. To add the objective of significant living without work to the other burdens of disability is seen as wrong and manifestly unfair. (1983 p.17)

¹For example, see Anderson & Clarke 1982, pp.189-190.

²A substantial normalisation and integration literature exists. For example, see Olson 1985; Symington 1984; and Wolfensberger 1972.

Ward et al.'s model, however, still accepts an individualised view of the 'transitional problem'. For example Ward et al.'s model has been applied to special education, to evaluate its cost effectiveness in relation to individuals' post-school outcomes. At the moment, though, the operationalised 'Special Educational Costs Model' does not include any consideration of the environment within which the young people live. In the discussion of 'employment' or 'probability of achieving employment' outcomes, no mention is made of including factors about where the young people live (for example, rural or urban, with high unemployment or low unemployment) or the local services necessary for employment (for example, transportation to and from work, accessible work places, attendant care within the work place). By this Special Educational Costs Model, the cost-effectiveness of young people's education then may be criticised on the basis of the young people's 'poor' outcomes. But do the 'poor' outcomes really result from ineffective education of the individual young people, or because of a hostile local environment? While ineffective education probably does contribute to 'poor' post-school outcomes (see pages 18-22), other social factors and the level of opportunities available are also significant contributors.

Both models see the problem of transition as the problem of the individual. Such individualisation is not the only way to conceptualise the problem. For instance, the 'problem' can be seen as due to society's continual focus on the young person's **handicap**. While young people may be impaired, it is society that handicaps them; it is society that stigmatises them, on the basis of their disability; and it is society that is unprepared and unwilling to accept people with their impairments or disabilities. Corbett and Barton put the point strongly when discussing present thinking on young disabled people's transition: "*An individualised model avoids acknowledging the political context in which change has to occur*" (1992 p.27).

Conclusion

The comparison of transition models demonstrates that a consensual answer to CERI's question—"transition to what?"—does not yet exist across the transition literature. A particular debate continues over whether or not employment should be 'the' goal of transition, or indeed 'a' goal at all for young people's transition. Some core overlapping options and issues do

emerge, whether placed in linear or circular models or described abstractly or more concretely. For example, each model seeks to 'unpack' the concept of 'transition' for young people with disabilities leaving school. Some type of day-time activity for all young people leaving school is included in every model. All the models look at the 'transitional problem' as a problem of the individual young disabled person leaving school, rather than as a problem for society.

The chapter's discussion suggests that the way in which transition is conceptualised is important, because how transition is perceived affects how it is addressed. From the comparison of transitional models, I emerged with three specific questions about these models and the 'transitional problem' setting more generally:

- 1) What is the effect of transitional models' individualisation? Individualisation may be viewed positively, as being client-centred rather than service-centred, as actually meeting the needs of clients (for example, see Hubbard 1992). Individualisation can also be viewed negatively, as camouflaging and diverting attention away from the political or social context that is perpetuating the 'social problem'.
- 2) Should employment be a transitional goal? The transitional goal? On one hand, disabled people themselves consistently state that employment is essential to their quality of life: not only in terms of income, but also self-esteem, socialisation, and daily purpose. On the other hand, unemployment statistics are high, and young people and disabled people are particularly vulnerable in labour markets. Employment may be an unrealistic goal. Further, perhaps society places too much emphasis on employment in general and should expand its valuation to other types of productive activity, such as volunteer work.
- 3) How prescriptive should transitional models be? Particularly if the concept of adolescence underlines transitional models, young people's own views can easily be ignored because adolescence is considered a 'troublesome' time period of lower status than adulthood. Should all disabled young people work towards achieving the list of transitional goals? What if they do not wish to fulfil certain goals or would like to work towards other goals? What if the young people's goals are considered 'unrealistic'? Who determines whether or not these goals are 'realistic'?

Such issues provide underlying threads to the following analysis chapters, as questions at the heart of the debates about transition, and of essential importance to young people's lives.

CHAPTER FOUR: THEORETICAL TOOLS

Most research addressing the 'transitional problem' has taken a transition model for granted and investigated the model's components. Research and reports have addressed transitional issues such as lack of sufficient income (Hirst 1990), lack of post-school opportunities for people with physical disabilities (Hirst 1983; Landreville 1992; Warnock 1978), and lack of employment for disabled people post-school (National Advisory Council on Employment of Disabled People (NACEDP); Ontario Advisory Council for Disabled People (OACDP) 1990; Walker 1982). This literature suggests practical changes in policy: such as changes in the qualifications for, and amount of, benefits; increased daytime opportunities for people with physical disabilities; and supported employment.

Transition research to date provides extensive and practical suggestions for change. The research has influenced policy development. For instance, Thomson and associates' research has influenced Scottish recording procedures for young people with 'Special Educational Needs'; the Warnock report used Walker's (un)employment survey of disabled young people for its legislative proposals; and the OACDP's promotion of employment equity legislation in Ontario increased pressure on the Ontario government to enact it. Transition research has encouraged dramatic changes over the past decade.

Yet, Chapter Two displays the difficulties young disabled people still face when they leave school. Why does the problem of transition still exist, despite over a decade of inter-professional, inter-agency assessments, specialised vocational training and counselling, and increased political and professional attention to the issues? Is it naive to expect that all this attention, effort and money should have dissolved the obstacles and better prepared the young people?

Construction of Social Problems

Beilharz writes: "... rather than arguing about how we construct the problem ... we set the agenda behaving as though it set itself" (1987 p.389). Social constructionists such as Beilharz—as Gill et al. 1991 term such theorists—challenge our acceptance of social problems. Problems are **not** given (Schon 1979, p.261); rather problems are **constructed**.

Consider one aspect of the 'transitional problem'. The limited post-school opportunities for young people with disabilities are defined as a **special** problem. The problem is different—in both magnitude and, according to many authors, also in composition—from the difficulties nondisabled young people face post-school (for example, see Disabled Persons' Community Resources (DPCR) 1991, p.6; Edgar 1988, p.6; Hutchinson & Tennyson 1986, p.x; Palmer 1985, p.11; Rowan 1980, p.22; Seppalainen 1990; this work p.1) This differentiation has certain advantages—such as extra attention by government, researchers and service providers to raising and addressing the 'special problem'—and disadvantages—people with disabilities are once more set apart from their peers without disabilities and are often addressed by different policies and services.

Identifying a 'problem' gathers attention around certain factors, which are then fit into a frame that constructs the problem: "*naming*" and "*framing*" (Schon 1979, p.264). Out of complex reality, certain features are highlighted and others are ignored as irrelevant. Rein and Schon write of society's "*reservoirs of frames*" (1977 p.240): frames from which society's members can borrow to structure the selected factors. Particular ways of framing experience become powerful at certain times in certain societies (Rein & Schon 1977, p.240). These particular frames become respectable, commonly spoken of, and rarely questioned.

Edelman¹ explores language's constructive role in (United States') politics, "*social problems*" being one facet of his critique. A situation or group is not perceived as a social problem because of the situation's or group's inherent features, writes Edelman. Rather, discourse constructs issues in policy-making. (1971 p.66; 1985 p.10)

Edelman describes some of the effects of constructing social problems:

They [social problems] signify who are virtuous and useful and who are dangerous or inadequate, which actions will be rewarded and which penalised. They constitute people as subjects with particular kinds of aspirations, self-concepts, and fears, and they create beliefs about the relative importance of events and objects. They are critical in determining who exercise authority and who accept it. They construct arenas of immunity from concern because those areas are not seen as problems. (1988 pp.12-13)

¹The following discussion is based upon Edelman's 1971, 1977 and 1985 works, with a quotation from his 1988 work.

Power is distributed by the construction of a social problem. Certain roles are assigned to people. Solutions are implied. Thus the characterisation of the problem is central to policy-making and is worth debating.

Every enduring social problem has “*contradictory myths*” that work separately and in combination to perpetuate the problem. The two most common myths are ‘human nature’ and the ‘social system’: i.e., either the social problem is the fault of individuals (human nature) or people are victims of an exploitative social system. (1985 p.17) If the problem is the fault of the individual, then individuals can be blamed. If the problem is the social system, then the policy makers cannot change the system. Either myth leads to inaction, or action that does not substantially alter the factors causing the problem.²

Edelman’s argument does not seem inviolable. Enduring social problems defined by the ‘social system’ myth do appear to have at least been modified by policy makers. For example, disabled people have argued that the social system discriminates against them. Anti-discrimination policy has been made to combat this discrimination legally, in both Canada and the United States, and society does seem to have changed significantly (although arguably not enough). Edelman’s myths, however, can be perceived in many social problems’ constructions, and are provocative viewpoints by which to consider the problems’ constructions and perpetuation.

Like Edelman, Gusfield³ asserts discourse’s definitive role in constructing a ‘social problem’ (1981 p.3) and emphasises the struggle over discourse in social problem formulation (1989 p.432). Descriptions or narratives do not automatically succeed; arguments over particular characterisations are central to the political process (1989 p.437). Perceiving a situation as a social problem can, in fact, be resisted. For example, Gusfield discusses the gay movement’s resistance to homosexuality being deemed ‘deviant’ and thus a ‘social problem’. As such, legal and medical control of the ‘homosexuality’ problem has ebbed, and more open political and cultural conflict has emerged on different sexual life-styles. (1989 p.438)

Once situations or groups are labelled as ‘social problems’, however, Gusfield argues that issues are depoliticised. Terms like ‘welfare’ and

²Edelman thus seems to have his own view of the reality of ‘social problems’ that he fails to articulate explicitly and fails to question. Edelman questions others’ construction of ‘reality’ but not his own.

³The following discussion is based upon Gusfield’s 1981 and 1989 writings.



'helping' and 'social problems' are used instead of terms like 'rights' and 'wants' and 'opportunities'. Attention is placed on 'troublesome persons' and not on the institutional and structural features that create the 'trouble'. (1989 p.433)⁴ Such statements reflect back on the individualisation found in the transition models (see pages 47-48). Is attention focused on the disabled young people instead of the institutional and structural features that create the obstacles when the young people leave school?

While questions can be asked of their theorisation, both Edelman and Gusfield explore several components useful to de-construct seemingly obvious and irrefutable 'social problems'. They introduce the importance of discourse in social problems' construction. Gusfield in particular emphasises the struggle to define 'social problems'. Both writers argue that social problems are not neutral reflections of 'reality' but particular constructions that have advantages and disadvantages for different groups of people. They point out that the way a social problem is constructed will suggest particular ways it will be addressed. These ways will not necessarily 'solve' the problem but may serve to perpetuate the status quo and the power distribution.

Kirp's Special Education Policy Frameworks: Great Britain vs. the United States

In his 1982 paper, David Kirp takes this idea of social problems' construction and particularises it to special education policy. Kirp classifies five different 'policy frameworks' by which social problems can be characterised in policies. He applies this classification to British special education policy in comparison to that of the United States. Riddell et al. followed in 1990 with a paper based on Kirp's theoretical frameworks and practical findings, which analyses Scottish special education policy.

Kirp provides brief descriptions of his five policy frameworks. A **professional** framework offers professional expertise as the best way to address a policy question. A **political** framework resolves the policy issue by relying on political judgement, direct ideologically driven clashes, or

⁴ Gusfield here obviously uses 'social problems' differently from Edelman: Gusfield defines 'social problems' as always using the individualisation myth, whereas Edelman states that 'social problems' can also be defined by their roots in an 'exploitative social system'.

negotiations among interested parties. Fair decision-making can be relied on within a **legal** framework, or consistency and internal accountability in a **bureaucratic** framework. The fifth possibility allows the market to deal with the policy issue, with various degrees of regulation. Kirp terms this possibility the **market-led** framework. (pp.137-138)

Each framework is advocated by different policy actors, and represents different ways of perceiving—morally and practically—the policy issue (p.138). The location of policy within particular frameworks results in various allocations of power, so the choice of framework is a central policy question (p.139). Once the choice is made, incremental policy change typically continues rather than more radical change (pp.139-140). Policy is not (usually) located in only one framework. Different combinations are commonly used. Kirp suggests that combined frameworks cannot coexist together easily.

Kirp traces British special education policy development. The Education Act of 1944 firmly established British special education within a medical/ professional framework. This framework only continued with the Warnock Report (1978) and the resulting 1981 legislation. Kirp suggests that the Warnock Committee was unable from its conception to provide any substantial change to special education's framework because the committee was staffed mainly with professionals chosen from within existing special education services, and required consensual proposals (pp.154-155).

The Warnock Report and the 1981 legislation do change medical/ psychological labelling to categorisation by 'special education needs'. Young people are no longer categorised by official medical categories, but have 'Records of Special Educational Needs'⁵. According to Kirp, this change merely alters the type of professional categorisation, and furthers the dependence of specific professional expertise to evaluate 'special educational needs'. Throughout the Warnock report and following legislation, details of educational offerings are vague and peppered with words such as 'appropriate' and 'needs'. These words provide a large latitude for professional assessment and expertise to decide what is appropriate and what is needed. (pp.156-158)

⁵Kirp uses the English (and Welsh) equivalent 'Statement of Special Educational Needs' in his 1982 paper. The Scottish phrase 'Record of SEN' is used here to maintain consistency with previous descriptions of Scottish special education policy (Chapter Two).

Parents are mentioned within the Warnock Report, Kirp notes, but are described as partners with professionals. The professional framework is thus not questioned by one of rights; rather, parents are to be included as professionals. A Named Person is suggested (as an advocate for the parents/child), but the very people identified as suitable candidates are the service providers themselves (the health visitor and the headteacher). If the parents or students are unhappy with health or education services, their Named Person may have a conflict of interest in advocating for change, when the Named Person her/himself is providing the unsatisfactory service. (pp.159-161)

Riddell et al. explore parental rights within Scottish education legislation and guidelines. Parental views must be solicited for special educational assessment, but how much they must be considered within the assessment is unspecified (1990 p.100). Although parents are explicitly given the right to choose schools for their children, the 1981 legislation provides four reasons whereby an education authority can ignore parents' choices. These reasons can be so widely interpreted that almost any disabled child could be excluded from a school by these criteria (p.100). An appeals system does exist, although appeals are only possible on certain aspects of recording. Parents have a limited chance of successful appeal since education authorities select the tribunal members (p.100). In seven years (1983-1990), only 24 appeals were lodged in reference to the special education legislation. Statutory letters to parents are typically so formal as to be incomprehensible (p.105) and assume parental agreement to decisions unless the parent disagrees within fourteen days (p.99). Riddell et al.'s list displays that the supposed partnership between parents and professionals is weak, and parental rights not substantially embedded, protected and supported within Scottish legislation and guidelines.

In combination, Kirp and Riddell et al. amply underline the continued professional framework of British special education policy. Kirp summarises British special education policy's aspirations as:

... enabling professionals, through the exercise of benign discretion, to offer the highest level of service on the least stigmatising terms possible, given available social resources. (p.173)

According to Kirp, the 1981 legislation may raise a rhetoric of rights and parental power, but the inner workings of the legislation and practice only further rely on professional expertise rather than significantly altering the

policy framework. In contrast, Kirp writes that the United States' special education policy:

... creates a dynamic tension among the competing frameworks, in which varying conceptions of the good social welfare system are pressed by all who have been invited into the house of policy. (p.173)

Bureaucratic concerns of control and accountability are set against professional interests in autonomy; the United States' emphasis on 'mainstreaming' is a political judgement. 'Appropriate' special education is a legally recognised right, with a due-process hearing as a legal safeguard (p.168). Kirp promotes curbing the authority of professional providers in Britain, and moving British special education policy closer to the United States' rights-centred model (p.174).

Riddell et al. criticise Kirp's support of the rights-centred United States' model. They accuse Kirp of failing to recognise that not all parents are willing and able to use litigation to defend their rights (1990 p.108)—parents are not all equally placed to defend their rights through litigation. Some parents do have more financial and educational resources with which to fight within the court system. In the United States, however, one parent's fight can affect all other parallel decisions (often not only in the future but also retrospectively). Legal rights thus can provide a balance to professional and bureaucratic power, even if not all parents can exert such power. Kirp, though, is somewhat misleading in his use of a 'rights-centred' framework to describe United States' special education policy. Note that a 'rights-centred' framework is **not** included in his list of five frameworks. For example, Kirp raises the influence of civil rights lobbyists on America's special education policy: rights can also be part of a political framework, not only a legal framework. The rights-centred model is a **combination** of policy frameworks.

Kirp supports the United States' model because it creates a **tension between** frameworks. Curbing the authority of the professional providers—Kirp's concluding reason for promoting the United States' model (p.174)—is not only created by expanding parental litigation, but by other tensions between frameworks. Riddell et al.'s criticism does not capture this complexity, however valid their point is on its own. Riddell et al. could have asked why Kirp did not introduce this concept of an over-arching rights-orientation more theoretically and explicitly. Kirp dedicates considerably more attention in his paper to the specifics of United States' and British special

education policy than he does to developing his typology. His definitions of the five different frameworks are sparse and perhaps under-explicated.

Kirp's theorisation is particularly weak in his distinction between professional and bureaucratic frameworks. The professional framework is defined as having policy questions "*settled by recourse to professional expertise, and in that event, expert say prevails*" (pp.137-138).

"*Bureaucratic standards of consistency and internal accountability*" define the bureaucratic framework (p.138). Kirp identifies special education in Britain as "*essentially a bureaucratified, professionally run undertaking*" (p.167) but makes no clear distinction between the two frameworks in his preceding analysis of the Warnock Report. On page 172, Kirp drops the bureaucratic framework in defining Britain's special education policy—without explanation—to leave it described as "*professionally-centred*" in his conclusion.

Further comparisons and distinctions could be outlined between professional and bureaucratic frameworks. The key workers in these frameworks—professionals and bureaucrats—both make claim to expert knowledge but of different kinds. Professionals claim to have abstract knowledge, which they apply to individuals. Bureaucrats claim to have specific knowledge about rules, which they also apply to individuals. Professionals are accountable to their peers whereas bureaucrats are accountable to their supervisors.

As Kirp's article suggests, bureaucratic and professional frameworks seem to coexist with considerable ease. Fulcher (1989) states this connection explicitly in her analysis of special education policy: "*Bureaucracy is a key institutional base of profession[alism]...*" (p.264). Bureaucracy increasingly employs professionals and para-professionals (p.264). (British educational psychologists' expanding roles in special education is a case in point.) Bureaucracy can require professional expertise, by separating out clear areas of responsibility and spheres that require the application of professional knowledge (p.264). For example, young people must be assessed professionally as having 'special educational needs', according to the 1981 legislation, in order to have rights to special education services.

Neither Kirp nor Fulcher explore the possible tensions between the two frameworks in terms of British special education policy. For example, bureaucrats' range of discretion is typically smaller than professionals'; this could create conflicts for professionals working within a bureaucratic

framework. Following all the rules, and having limited scope in interpreting them, can run counter to decisions professionals might wish to make based on their professional expertise. This conflict can be charted in Canadian doctors' long fight in the 1980's against the nationalisation of Canada's health services—one of the doctors' most firmly made points was their abhorrence of bureaucratic constraints over their professional judgement. Bureaucratic and professional frameworks are not always happy and supportive partners, but can at times be in conflict.

Kirp's five political frameworks may be under-theorised, but they do provide a provocative structure to consider policies comparatively. Further, 'transitional' policy for young disabled people leaving school is often part, or an extension, of special education policy. For example, Scotland has the foundational blocks of Scotland's transitional policy contained within its special education policy: Future Needs Assessments, Further Education College link courses, and in-school preparation for post-school life. Substantively, Kirp's and Riddell et al.'s consideration of United States', British, and Scottish special education policy can have direct application to components of Ontario and Scottish transitional policies.

Evaluation of Kirp's Frameworks: EMPOWERMENT

Kirp does promote the United States' model of special education policy because it creates a "*dynamic tension*" between the different frameworks, which prevents any one framework from being too powerful (p.173). Such a promotion never questions whether the special education policy should exist in the first place (Riddell et al. 1990, p.108), nor whether one framework should not be more powerful. Kirp distinctly recognises that the five individual frameworks are not merely descriptors, but represent alternative values (p.139). Surely he should have also considered that the **combinations** of these frameworks similarly represent alternative values and are not merely neutral descriptors, and questioned whether a 'dynamic tension' was valuable in itself.

Just as Kirp's policy frameworks are potentially provocative descriptors of transitional policy, the 'empowerment' concept is a potentially provocative evaluator of Kirp's policy frameworks.

Defining 'Empowerment'

The concept of 'empowerment' is presently much in vogue. It appears in articles on a variety of subjects, from feminism to racial issues to the nurse-patient relationship. Community political movements use the concept as a rallying cry; a variety of service professionals try to operationalize the concept in practice. The concept's widespread use suggests its powerful attraction. 'Empowerment' raises related ideas of a 'just society', of 'taking charge', and 'ennoblement' (Banja 1990, p.615 and Cowen 1991, p.407). A discourse of 'empowerment' appears well suited to today's emphasis on the independence and rights of disabled people.

More particular to this research, the 'empowerment' concept fights against the exclusion of young disabled people's opinions, voice and participation in what happens to them as, and when, they leave school. My 1990 research in Ontario underlined the need to listen to young people and to take their viewpoints seriously, and the present failure of most services and professionals to do so (see page vi). Anderson and Clarke similarly found in their English research:

... the majority of young people in this group [special education] hadn't actually chosen their course or college, but had merely followed the advice offered by professionals ... Even where the students were very satisfied with the placement there was often a feeling that the decision had been presented to them as a fait accompli and parents also complained about the lack of consultation. (1982 p.189)

Indeed, Mary Hubbard promotes an "independent/ enabling/ empowerment model" (1992 p.ii) for the FNA meetings. At the very least, the empowerment concept requires a partnership between the professionals and the young people/ parents (for example, see Malin & Teasdale 1991). More extremely, the concept can emphasise young people's and parents' control over that of professionals and service providers (for example, see Seidel 1993). If young people's 'empowerment' is used to evaluate transitional policy, young people can be placed firmly in the centre of the discussion as the most important people and their opinions would be the most important to consider.

The predicted outcomes of an empowering process meet many of the criticisms levelled against the 'medical' and 'charity' models of disability⁶. Empowerment will result in:

⁶See Fulcher 1989 for description of these models.

... a positive self-concept, personal satisfaction, self-efficacy, a sense of mastery, a sense of control, a sense of connectedness, self-development, a feeling of hope, social justice ... and improved quality of life. (Gibson 1991, p.359)

These predicted outcomes match some of the desired psycho-sociological transitional goals of CERI's model (see page 43), but also can be extended to avoid the model's pervasive individualism. Empowerment can be conceptualised to link both the micro and macro levels of personal relationships and organisations, individual interactions and bureaucratic policies. Raddaport et al. (1987) do this overtly. As a construct, empowerment:

... ties together personal competencies and abilities to environments that provide opportunities for choice and autonomy in demonstrating these competencies. (referenced in Short & Rinehart 1992, p.952)

Individuals' strengths will be linked to opportune environments. If the environments do not exist, then policies and conditions must be promoted "that enable people to gain control over their lives" (Cowen 1991, p.407).

While effective rhetorically, the 'empowerment' concept has been used neither consistently nor clearly. As Ward and Mullender evocatively write:

... the term ['empowerment'] lacks specificity and glosses over significant differences. It acts as a 'social aerosol', covering up the disturbing smell of conflict and conceptual division. (1991 p.21)

To avoid being a 'social aerosol', a definition of 'empowerment' for the purpose of this research is outlined on the next page (Table B). The definition is set within the context of inter-disciplinary collaborations that involve young people (or clients) and professionals (the potential problems with such a context are described on pages 61-62):

Kirp's Five Policy Frameworks through the Lens of Young People's Empowerment

The concept of 'empowerment' has been commandeered by a wide range of literature, which displays its potential applicability to Kirp's policy frameworks.

Ward and Mullender make the connection between empowerment and a political framework clearly:

Table B: A Definition of 'Empowerment'

	Process	Outcome
Micro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clients' involvement in all stages of process • at least an equal partnership between professionals and clients • at most clients have greater control than professionals, in client-professional interactions • focus on abilities and solutions rather than disabilities and deficits (Gibson 1991, p.355) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clients have a "<i>positive self concept, personal satisfaction, self-efficacy, a sense of mastery, a sense of connectedness, self-development, a feeling of hope, social justice ... and improved quality of life</i>" (Gibson 1991, p.359) • clients have access to opportunities that facilitate their participation in general society • clients gain/ retain control of their services and way of living
Macro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clients, and possibly professionals, work to create increased "<i>policies and conditions which do enable people to gain control of their lives</i>" (Cowen 1991, p.407) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the creation of structures and opportunities that enable clients to control their lives

... empowerment as we define it is committed in its politics. It recognises that the response to what may appear personal has to be highly political.
(1991 p.24)

'Empowerment' has been part of the mobilising rhetoric of the disability advocacy movements, drawing disabled people together into a political force. The disabled advocacy movement has fought to change services and policies, so that disabled people are no longer charity recipients, but citizens who require consideration and demand rights. Successes have been documented and advertised (for example, see Oliver 1991a). If disabled people take political power, the political framework may easily accommodate their empowerment on all levels.

The disability advocacy movement has particularly insisted on disabled people's rights in legislation. The successful struggles in both the United States (the Americans with Disabilities Act 1990) and Canada (Section 15 of the *Charter of Absolute Rights and Freedoms*) provide legal bulwarks against discrimination on the basis of disability. The British disability advocacy movement similarly has fought for anti-discrimination legislation in Great Britain (for example, see Oliver 1991a). Such legislation enshrines empowering structures and opportunities, and the struggle for such legislation and later in litigation can be empowering at all other micro and macro levels. Empowerment can exist within a legalistic framework.

The consumerism movement has encouraged people's empowerment within the market (Oliver 1991b). People's empowerment at a micro level would be conditional on their financial means to participate and their personal means to assert their voices. In turn, their financial means may depend on the market's structure and opportunities by which people can gain these financial means. The market framework can arguably promote disabled people's empowerment at all levels (if they have resources), and certainly does not preclude it.

Within the disability advocacy movement, professionalism has largely been seen as a barrier to disabled people's empowerment (see, for example, Oliver 1991b). Professionals, on the other hand, have utilised 'empowerment' as the crucial concept by which to alter their services (see, for example, Ward & Mullender 1991; Parsons 1991). Simon (1990) discusses the 'paradox of empowerment', where social workers aim to help empower their clients, while the social workers are firmly embedded in the institutional structure that disempowers the clients in the first place. Simon concludes:

*Does this paradox of empowerment mean that social workers cannot help their clients? Certainly not. Social workers counsel, serve, assist, enable, catalyze, foster, nurture, mobilise, advocate, comfort, inspire, facilitate, broker, teach, train, lobby and organize in myriad ways that help clients. Yet, I suggest, the one function that social workers, or, for that matter, anyone else **cannot** perform for another person is that of empowerment. ... Others can only aid and abet in this empowerment process. They do so by providing a climate, a relationship, resources, and procedural means through which people can enhance their own lives. (1990 p.32)*

Even within the disability advocacy movement itself, disabled people have used professional legal expertise to fight for their legal rights and to influence legislation. The professional framework does not seem to exclude the possibility of clients' empowerment. The 'paradox of empowerment', however, suggests that **how** the professionals deliver their services is critical to whether they help or hinder their clients' empowerment.

Can a bureaucratic framework be empowering to young disabled people? Potentially, it could be the means by which legal rights are accessed—for example, to services, to finances, or to appeals—or professional expertise provided, which in themselves can arguably be empowering. Weatherley and Lipsky's description of bureaucracy, however, shows clear examples of how a bureaucratic framework can be in conflict with young people's empowerment. Weatherley and Lipsky (1977) labelled the public employees who work directly with the public, and thus have considerable discretion over their work, as 'street-level bureaucrats'. These street-level bureaucrats have to find ways to accommodate both their required job tasks and the reality of resource limitations. In their analysis of front-line workers in Massachusetts's special education administration, the authors found that many of these workers routinized procedures, modified goals, rationed services, and limited or controlled clientele, in order to fulfil the two demands. Weatherley and Lipsky's analysis underlines the power of these street-level bureaucrats in making policy—over that of their clients, their managers and the formal policy-makers. Their analysis of special education bureaucracy suggests that a bureaucratic framework could threaten young people's empowerment, rather than encourage it.

Empowerment is not guaranteed in any of Kirp's frameworks, for in each framework certain groups of people can lack the means by which to participate. Specific aspects of the policy setting seem to determine if the framework would facilitate or discourage young people's empowerment. But

do certain frameworks seem **more likely** to lead to young people's empowerment? Conversely, do certain frameworks seem **less likely** to lead to young people's empowerment?

Scottish and Ontarian young people are more likely to have certain resources, by which policy decisions are made within the frameworks, than other resources. For example, young people are unlikely to have professional expertise but they may have legal rights and access to legal representation. Certain resources can be more easy than others for young disabled people to obtain (for example, money compared to professional expertise) or to combat (such as political influence compared to key bureaucratic positions). Further, the histories of certain policy settings make some frameworks more likely to facilitate young people's empowerment than others. For example, politics have been used by older disabled people to empower themselves, whereas the professional and bureaucratic frameworks have been sharply criticised by disabled people as disempowering. Substantial change would need to occur within the professional and bureaucratic frameworks, according to many disabled advocates and others, before such frameworks could be empowering⁷. Access and possession of resources, and the historical baggage of policy settings, do make certain frameworks seem more likely to facilitate young people's empowerment than others.

Problem-Setting, Policy Frameworks and Empowerment

This research aims to outline and consider how the 'transitional problem' is conceptualised within policy/ practice and how it is thus addressed. The 'social constructionists' raise our awareness that 'social problems' are not exact depictions of 'reality', but are constructions that select certain factors and discard others. These constructions suggest particular ways of addressing the problems; the constructions tend to contain certain 'myths' that prevent substantial change; and the constructions have various advantages and disadvantages for different people.

Like the social constructionists, Kirp does not accept that the setting of social problems is inevitable. He considers how social problems are set within

⁷For a discussion of the disempowering effects of professional and bureaucratic frameworks, consider Oliver 1991a and 1991b, and Hubbard 1992.

policy, and develops a typology of five policy frameworks. Once within a particular framework, or set of frameworks, a particular construction of the 'social problem' is made and thus particular ways to address the problem suggested. Given this research's interest in transitional policy and particularly the conceptualisations of the 'transitional problem', Kirp's policy frameworks appear a useful theoretical structure to apply to the research's findings. The empowerment concept can provide a tool by which to evaluate transitional policy's chosen frameworks and the specifics of the problem-settings.

Kirp was able to consider the 'problem-setting' of special education through written United States' and British legislation and reports, as well as United States' court cases. Very little, however, of transitional policy can be located within Scottish and Ontarian written legislation or reports, and even less in litigation. A wider conceptualisation of 'policy' therefore needs to be used to locate Scottish and Ontarian societies' responses to the 'transitional problem'.

Fulcher perceives policy as "*political practice*" resulting from groups/people with competing objectives struggling in particular arenas (1989 pp.11 and 259). Struggle, and thus policy, occurs at all levels of the institutions/service provision at all times (p.259). Fulcher insightfully explains:

The divisions ... in educational bureaucracies or state apparatuses between policy and implementation reflect the fragmentation which characterises the bureaucratic and politicised nature of struggles in late twentieth-century life. The divisions are themselves political constructs. (p.259)

Such a conceptualisation of policy as practice appears particularly appropriate for policy affecting young disabled people when they leave school, for transitional policy is predominantly decided at local levels.

Fulcher next describes how such policy struggle takes place: discourse. She writes that discourses: "... articulate the world in certain ways: they 'identify' 'problems', perspectives on those problems and thus 'solutions'" (1989 p.8). Discourse is used both as a tactic and as a theory (p.11) and thus all practical activities are simultaneously "*theoretical or technical, moral or political*" (p.11).

Fulcher thus brings Edelman's and Gusfield's arguments about 'social problems' down from their abstract level into the work of everyday policy/practice. Both what is said and what is done in everyday policy/practice are not neutral vehicles of communication and set policies, but active creators and perpetuators of policies and perceived realities. Such a view can prevent the

acceptance of the transitional problem-setting as 'natural' and 'obvious', and can unveil how 'social problems' are being constructed and perpetuated.

With this version of policy making, we can go beyond the surface, into the activities and discourse of individuals. As Beilharz writes, such a theory allows us:

... to understand an argument more completely or contextually than its proponents do—the object becomes that of seeking to understand policy better than its authors, to locate and identify the meaning of the text, in its language or perspective rather than its (often instrumental) intention. (1987 p.393)

We can ask: how are we conceptualising transition? We can consider the advantages and disadvantages of such conceptualisations, and we can possibly perceive alternative ways of defining and addressing the 'transitional problem'.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

Three research questions were asked in **Chapter One**:

- What kind of solutions are inter-agency, inter-disciplinary collaborations to the 'transitional problem'?
- How do the collaborators perceive the 'transitional problem' and thus how do the collaborators seek to address it?
- How do the various collaborators contribute to these perceptions?

Chapters Two to Four filled out aspects of these questions. Background information was provided, certain tools suggested to answer the questions, and gaps noted in the literature, which make the above questions particularly appropriate.

Chapter Two presented statistics and research on the 'transitional problem'. My particular version of the 'transitional problem' was thus developed: one that covered a wide range of intersecting areas and one that suggested a dearth of opportunities for many young disabled people post-school. My version highlighted particular areas—income, education, employment, and living in the community—which imply their centrality to my priority list in terms of 'transition'. By writing from the perspective of two mythical people, I hoped to emphasise that young people's experience and perspective of the 'transitional problem' should be critical for describing the problem, and identifying what transitional goals should be.

Certain transition research concludes that young disabled people are being 'cast adrift' when they leave school: the young people are failing to make the connections from the children's services to the often fragmented adult services. Educational-Vocational (EVs) assessments and Future Needs Assessments (FNAs) were established in Sheldon, Ontario and Scotland respectively, to ensure greater inter-disciplinary collaboration and co-operation for young people's transition from school. What little research had been done on FNAs, however, suggests that the FNAs do not provide continuous staffing, comprehensive assessments nor substantial inter-disciplinary collaboration. A particular failing noted by Kennedy and Wassell (1991) was the lack of consensus on transitional goals, by FNA professional participants. To date, the EVs have not been extensively evaluated. An

investigation of Sheldon's EVs and Scottish FNAs thus seems timely, and the questions above pertinent.

In **Chapter Three**, representative transition models were compared. The chapter investigated how transition is conceptualised within the literature on young disabled people leaving school. The chapter underlined how, even theoretically, no consensus exists on transitional goals. Three questions emerged from the chapter's discussion:

- What are the effects of transitional models' individualisation?
- Should employment be a/ the transitional goal?
- How prescriptive should transitional models be?

Such questions further particularised the three research questions asked.

Young people's opinions seemed largely absent in the construction of the literature's transition models. Ward et al.'s work appears to take the most account of young people's views, but notably the young people were asked only to describe their own personal goals in interviews and not asked to define 'transition' abstractly. The Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI)'s and Corbett's models appear to be based largely on professionals' views. In practice, are young people involved in conceptualising and addressing the 'transitional problem'?

None of the transition models consider **how** transition is conceptualised, only **what** the conceptualisation is/ should be. The key works cited in **Chapter Four** show that policy problem-setting is not a neutral act and always involves, and results in, particular power relationships. Kirp's theorising of five policy frameworks is particularly useful for considering the 'transitional problem'. He provides a typology of ways policies are conceptualised and applies this typology comparatively to special education policy in Great Britain and the United States. Kirp supports one type of policy-setting but does not adequately defend his choice. The empowerment concept was developed for this research, as an evaluative tool to consider Kirp's frameworks. Chapter Four thus suggests tools to consider and evaluate inter-disciplinary collaborations' conceptualisations of transition, across countries.

As Fulcher explains, policy is not only made at the level of formal written policy, but also at 'street-level'. Fulcher's point is particularly pertinent to transitional policy, since little is legislated and mandated by the civil servants (particularly in the voluntary EVs in Ontario) and much is determined by actual practice. Kirp's paper, however, relies on written

documentation and interview with experts, and not observation in practice. A gap is thus suggested within transition literature: how the 'transitional problem' is conceptualised and addressed in practice.

A Case Study

Ward et al. write about the FNA meetings:

These [FNA] assessment meetings focus on the transition process. They identify the issues of concern, such as future education, independent living and employment, and suggest pathways towards goals. Transition is conceptualised in these meetings and these conceptualisations are used to facilitate decisions. (1991 p.3)

A similar statement could be made about the EV assessments. As such, these collaborations are key arenas of 'struggle', in which 'transitional policy' is debated, built and used. The assessment meetings provide windows into how the 'transitional problem' is perceived and addressed by inter-agency, interdisciplinary assessments, plans and management.

A case study investigation of these meetings was decided upon for both theoretical and practical reasons. First, qualitative research can increase **depth** in both participants' contributions and other forms of data gathering (Lichtenstein 1993, p.337). The value of such research rests with "*the novelty of new insights and the variety of new hypotheses generated*" (Lichtenstein 1993, p.337). The research questions appeared more amenable to an intensive rather than extensive approach. They asked questions most participants had never considered, and addressed assumptions and underlying patterns that typically passed unnoticed. The intensive style of the case studies allowed a variety of threads to be pulled together, to provide a picture of how the meetings set and addressed the 'transitional problem', and thus to begin answering the research questions.

Second, the research was constrained by practicalities. Sheldon's EVs were a local response by local professionals. Only one other programme was similar in Ontario. At some level, then, a case study was required if Ontario programmes were to be considered. A four-way comparison—among the two Ontarian programmes and two sets of Scottish FNAs—might have been undertaken. The logistical difficulties, created by the distance between these four different sites, the meetings' own schedules and the year set aside for

fieldwork, made such a four-way comparison nearly impossible (for example, see the logistical problems found in doing a two-way comparison on page 77). Trying to gather more meetings from two sites seemed a more productive approach than spreading the fieldwork across four sites. Meetings were attended at the other Ontario site and another Colburne site as an informal check on interpretations and conclusions made in the formal research.

The time constraints of the Ph.D. programme necessitated that the fieldwork took place within approximately one year. The FNA meetings in this research represented a time slice of FNAs rather than a follow-through of the young people through the FNA system. (The EV meetings were one-off events.) I was unable to trace the possible impact and effectiveness of the FNAs and EVs in respect to young people's futures, within the time span allotted. While such research definitely should be done (see pages 276-277 conclusion), at least five years of data gathering would be required to address such issues.

A case study cannot provide an overall survey and description of interdisciplinary collaborations. It can intensively describe and interpret particular ones. Such an approach appears particularly suitable for the research questions asked and a feasible approach for Ph.D. research.

A Comparative Study

For a comparative study, the two (or more) situations must be both similar and different enough to provide good comparisons. (See Table C next page, for a comparison of the two meeting types.)

Scotland and Ontario

Crichton writes about Britain, Canada and Australia:

They have approached the solving of social problems in similar ways, for their thought processes, ideologies and social structures have common historical origins. Their political and social institutions have grown from the same roots and they continue to borrow ideas from one another. (1981 p.157)

Table C: Certain Comparisons between Educational-Vocational Meetings and Robertson School's Future Needs Assessment Meetings

	Educational-Vocational Meetings	Future Needs Assessment Meetings at Robertson School
General educational context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education available to all children • Promotion of educational integration • Most EV clients attended semi-integrated or integrated schooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education available to all children • A growing promotion of educational integration • Robertson School was a segregated school. Many young people with special educational needs were placed in segregated schooling in Scotland.
General political context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-discrimination legislation both nationally and provincially, and guaranteed rights within the new constitution • Strong disability advocacy movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-discrimination legislation repeatedly put forward in Westminster, but not passed • Growing disability advocacy movement
General level of post-school opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problematic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problematic
Location of meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre (SRC) • conference room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colburne Region's Robertson School • school room
Requirement for meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary on client's part 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory requirement, further delineated by Scottish Office and Colburne Region guidelines
Client's eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if Sheldon area resident • if physically disabled • if over the age of 16 • if in the last 1 or 2 years of high school • if deemed suitable by EV team leader and nurse clinician 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if student had a record of special educational needs • once the student was 14 or older, the FNA process must have begun
% of local disabled young people receiving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less than 5% ¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100%
Professionals typically present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school personnel from the client's school • SRC's Young Adult and Adolescent Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professionals from various agencies
Typical time length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 to 20 minutes

¹Based on extrapolations from Disabled Person's Community Resources (DPCR) 1991 statistics (p.1) of young people with physical disabilities in the Sheldon area, and an estimate of twenty EV assessments taking place per year. This number should be taken with extreme caution as a representation of the percentage of eligible clients, as eligibility is partially determined by the team leader and nurse clinician (see pages 27-28).

Both Scotland and Ontario governments, for example, have moved away from institutionalisation of disabled people, to promoting their participation in their communities. Both Scottish and Ontarian professionals have adopted ideological phrases like 'integration', 'living within the community' and 'normalisation' to address the needs/ wants of disabled people. In both Scotland and Ontario, the government, the professionals and other interested parties are deeply concerned about the 'transition' of young disabled people from education to 'adulthood'.

Yet Scotland and Ontario have important differences. For example, the recently-created national *Charter of Rights and Absolute Freedoms*, firmly bases the rights of disabled people in Canadian law, policies and services. While the disability advocacy groups across Great Britain have lobbied hard for similar anti-discrimination legislation, they have not yet been successful. Ontario has moved further away from educational segregation than Scotland. Most young people with disabilities are placed in semi-integrated or mainstream classrooms in Ontario; publicly run segregated schools are still a common choice for Scottish students with disabilities, and only recently have regions begun explicitly to define integration policies.²

The EV and FNA Meetings

The EV and FNA meetings had certain similarities that were fundamental for this research. Both the EV and FNA meetings were inter-agency, inter-disciplinary collaborations. The collaborations aimed to address the 'transitional problem' for young disabled people. Both meetings brought together young people, parents and professionals to discuss assessments of the young people and possibilities for the young people's post-school futures.

At first glance, the EV and FNA meetings were set within different policy frameworks (see pages 52-53 for description of Kirp's categorisation of policy frameworks). The EVs were voluntary, undertaken within a medical setting by various professionals (with parents and young people). In a wider context, the EVs were set within a wide-spread policy orientation that emphasised the rights of clients and of disabled people (see pages vi-vii and 61). EVs thus seemed to be based on professional expertise and set within a wider context typified by legalistic and political frameworks. The FNAs were statutory requirements, undertaken within an educational setting by various

²For more specific exploration of the Scottish and Ontario situations for young people with disabilities, see Chapter Two.

professionals (with parents and young people). FNAs were structured by a legalistic framework, and set within an atmosphere of professional expertise. At least on the surface, the EVs and FNAs appeared to be set in different policy frameworks. These differences might well provide valuable comparative aspects in considering different policy options.

Practically, my choice of Ontario site prescribed the type of disabilities the EV young people might have. All those young people participating were eligible for the EVs because they had an identified physical disability (however slight). For comparative reasons, I chose Robertson School where all students had some type of physical disability. All the young people in this study, therefore, had a physical disability. Some used wheelchairs; some had learning difficulties; some had clear speech and some had difficulty communicating. While individual's impairments/ disabilities did impact on the particularities of their assessment meetings, the ways meetings proceeded differed little.

To utilise the World Health Organisation (WHO) distinctions³, the clients' impairments/ disabilities resulted in similar handicaps: that is, a similar reaction by (interaction with) society. All the young people were part of the disability system, which included a wide range of service professionals, such as rehabilitators, educationalists, social workers, etc. Many of these young people had been involved in this system for years, and most had grown up surrounded by the system and by its professionals. Particularly relevant to this study was the similar educational evaluation of the young people. All had been identified as having 'special educational needs' (Scotland) or being an 'exceptional pupil' (Ontario) and had been specially placed educationally (see pages 19-20 for further description).

In Chapter Two, the post-school outlook for young people was explored, both in Scotland and in Ontario. The post-school outlook was, unfortunately, only too similar in both countries. The future did look more

³WHO's distinctions are:

Impairment: *"any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function"*

Disability: *"any restriction or lack ... of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being"*

Handicap: *"a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or disability, that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal, depending on age, sex, social and cultural factors, for that individual."*

—as quoted in Ontario 1988, p.2.

promising than disabled people's past institutionalisation. However, the improvement could not hide the obstacles and lack of opportunities facing many young people once they left school.

One difference between the client groups was their age. Robertson School's students began the FNA process around the age of fourteen as required by law. The young people who participated in the fieldwork ranged from 14.5 to 18.5 years. EVs' clients, on the other hand, typically ranged from seventeen to 21. This discrepancy largely reflected the difference in educational progression in the respective places. In Scotland, the age sixteen leaving date was a real possibility: not only to leave for employment, but to leave for Further Education (FE) colleges. No exact parallel to FE colleges existed in Ontario. Young people tended to stay on at school to gather enough credits for a diploma. For most post-secondary school education, this diploma was a pre-requisite. Young people had the right to seven years of high school, and many young people stayed for most of these seven years. The stage of the young people at the time of their respective assessments—that is, the young people were in their last one or two years of school—was similar in both places but their age was not. This difference had at least one apparent effect on the assessment meetings: the Sheldon young people usually had had more work experience than the Robertson School's students, and were thus more definitive about their vocational capabilities and interests. Work experience was a more established and central part of Ontarian students' curricula than in Scotland. Other reasons than age, then, could have influenced the EV young people's greater definitiveness on career goals.

Because of the legal requirements, Robertson School orchestrated FNA meetings regularly for all students over the age of fourteen. All young people with a Record of Special Educational Needs were guaranteed these FNA meetings in Robertson School. In contrast, the EV meetings were voluntary. Twenty young people, on average, went through the EV assessments per year. This number represented less than 5% of the estimated population of young people with physical disabilities in the Sheldon area, between the ages of eighteen and 21 (see footnote on page 70). The FNA process had a far wider coverage of young disabled people than did the EV assessments. If eligibility for the Educational-Vocational Assessments also included the team leader's and nurse clinician's evaluation of the young people's suitability, however, very few young people considered 'eligible' were refused.

Other contrasts and similarities between the two meeting types will be brought out further in the research analysis. The two meeting types did have significant differences that affected the way in which transition was perceived, who contributed to these perceptions, and how the 'transitional problem' was addressed. The two meeting types did, however, appear to have basic similarities in their inter-professional, inter-agency support and in their clientele of young people with physical disabilities preparing to leave school. In combination, these similarities seemed to provide the possibility of comparison while the differences promised to suggest alternative ways of providing such assessments and collaborations.

Informal Fieldwork

I was already informed about the EV meetings and many of their clients, due to my past research and practical experience in Ontario. My undergraduate thesis, *Conflicts of Integration and Participation: An Ethnographic Account of Young People who are Physically Disabled in Ontario*, is my distillation of the world facing the young people, as described in over 60 interviews conducted throughout Ontario (see Preface). For several years before this research, I had worked with young disabled people throughout Ontario. As a result, I knew many of the young people who were clients of the Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre (SRC), and many of the Sheldon professionals. Through the help of these professionals, I was able to contact SRC's Young Adult and Adolescent Team, who provided considerable support for the research.

To a lesser degree, I also had previous experience within the Scottish educational system and knowledge of the FNA process. I volunteered for a year at Robertson School, meeting the school personnel and various students. I had the opportunity to talk informally to young people preparing to leave school. In March 1990, I attended six FNA meetings at Robertson School, to give me first-hand knowledge in preparation for my October fieldwork. I also became involved in a variety of community groups involving people with disabilities, and through these groups, talked with disabled people about their post-school lives. Within Colburne Region's system for young people with learning difficulties, formal committees had been organised to examine FNA and other post-school preparation; I was invited to attend some of these

committees' meetings, and heard what issues were being raised. I had also met with various service providers to talk about transitional issues and the FNAs were often a topic. Given my experience at Robertson School as a volunteer, it was a logical site to choose for my case study of FNA meetings. Robertson School staff generously offered considerable support in orchestrating my fieldwork.

Formal Fieldwork

The formal fieldwork involved five components: gaining consent from participants; audio-taping the meetings; observing the meetings; talking with the participants; and examination of written documents written for, or resulting from, the meetings.

1) Gaining Consent

Consent from the relevant institutions was requested. In Colburne Region, the institutions included the Scottish Office Education Department, the Regional Psychological Service, Colburne Region's Social Work Department, the Specialist Careers Service and Robertson School. Full proposals were sent to these organisations, to voyage through their various consent-giving systems. All professional participants, known in advance to be attending the meetings, were also asked to give their own personal consent. A two-page summary of the planned research was provided, along with the consent form. In Sheldon, once the SRC team had expressed its interest in working with me on this research, the proposal went through the Centre's research review system, which involved three stages of evaluation.

Participants' consent for fieldwork is a serious issue for any research; in this fieldwork, ensuring fully informed and free consent from parents and young people was a particular concern. Parents and young people are constantly bombarded by professionals, and have many people invading their lives. The young people, because of their age and because they have disabilities, are often neither asked nor listened to. I thus very much wished to respect parents' and young people's right to be informed and to choose to participate, or to choose not to participate, in this research.

In Colburne Region, parents and young people were approached through the mail by the school. Each young person and parent received an

informal leaflet⁴ about my research, which contained a section where people could sign their consent, and a supporting letter from the headteacher. In Sheldon, the parents and young people were similarly approached through the mail by the SRC team, with a more formal consent letter (following requirements of the SRC's research review system) and a supporting letter from the team. (See Appendix B.) This information was followed up by telephone calls from the headteacher and the team doctor, in Colburne Region and Sheldon respectively.

The medical team at the Robertson School meetings requested additional medical consent forms from the young people and the parents. This was included with my informal leaflet, and the headteacher's letter. (See Appendix B.)

The time-frame and location of the fieldwork were the only research constraints placed on who was approached to participate in the research. All but one participant (a Scottish parent) agreed to participate in the research. No reason was given to me for this refusal.

As far as was feasible, anonymity and confidentiality were promised to the young people and their parents. All tapes and written material were locked up when not in use, and computer records were coded and protected by passwords. After this research is complete, and the evaluation of the thesis finished, the audio-tapes will be erased. Real names of the participants have not been used in the reporting of this research. Aliases have been used for all schools and local areas. Neither Scotland nor Ontario was anonymized because the particularities of their legislation, policies, service structure and larger social structure for the young people were considered essential to understanding this research, and because their size lessened the possibility of easy identification of the fieldwork areas, schools and participants.

⁴Full consent can only be based on (potential) participants having the fullest information possible. Information must thus not only be available, but must be available in a comprehensible form. To gain consent, written information is often mailed to (potential) participants, so that the (potential) participants do not come in direct contact with the researchers interested in persuading them to participate. Written information, however, can be particularly inaccessible to some people with disabilities, because of perceptual or learning difficulties. Thus, an informal leaflet was designed for parents and young people in Colburne Region, which tried to convey full information, but also tried to be as accessible as written information could be. Given the lack of literacy within the general population, my concern about formal complex consent forms has implications beyond my particular research, which I suggest should be investigated more thoroughly. (For examples of 'informal' and 'formal' consent forms, compare the FNA leaflets with the EV consent forms in Appendix B.)

2 and 3) Audio-taping and Observing the Meetings

In Colburne Region, a set of FNA meetings was attended in October 1991, and another set in March 1992. In total, fourteen meetings were attended: five FNA1, two FNA1-2, two FNA2, and five FNA3⁵. I attended each meeting and audio-taped it, thus combining observation with audio-taping. As stated before, each FNA meeting was between ten and twenty minutes long. Three meetings were attended at the Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre (SRC) personally, and each meeting audio-taped. These two-part meetings were between one hour and a half, and two hours long. Unfortunately, the desired number of eight meetings was not reached during my time in Sheldon (three months): planned meetings were cancelled, despite the best efforts of the SRC team. The team continued to audio-tape meetings for me, and mailed the audio-tapes, questionnaires and reports to Scotland, bringing the total to seven meetings.

My attendance at the meetings and my audio-taping equipment perhaps inhibited the meetings, or otherwise altered their proceedings. By attending the meetings, however, I could gather a sense of the non-auditory discourse of the meetings—body postures, gestures, etc. I could also gather further insight into the process of the meetings: the institutional context, the physical arrangements and the procedures.

Videotaping the meetings might have been the ideal gatherer of such information as it could be re-watched but, after consultation with various authorities, gaining participants' consent to such a method appeared slim. In addition, participants would have had little time to adjust to the equipment given that the FNA meetings were only a few minutes long. I felt participants would be very disconcerted by the video-taping. I did not want to move to a room especially organised for hidden video-taping because I wished the meetings' set-up to remain, as much as possible, consistent to when I was not doing my research. Thus audio-taping equipment combined with my observation seemed a satisfactory compromise.

Between meetings where I did audio-tape, and those where I attended but did not audio-tape, I noticed no appreciable difference. I therefore presume that the audio-taping of the meetings had little effect on the

⁵The two FNA1-2 combined the introductory and decision-making mandate into one meeting. The young people had recently transferred from other schools, and they were thus beginning the FNA process later than formally mandated.

meetings' proceedings. Listening to the audio-tapes of meetings I did not attend in Sheldon, versus ones where I did attend, again showed little difference. While my non-attendance of certain Sheldon meetings meant the lack of observational data on those meetings, the comparison did allow the assumption that my presence at meetings did not greatly affect their proceedings. But both because I did not make video-tapes of the meetings, nor was I able to attend all meetings, I lacked a comprehensive picture of non-verbal actions.

4) Talking with the Participants

To reflect on the meetings themselves, interviews were held with the meetings' participants. An interview was held with each young person the day before her/ his meeting⁶ (see Appendix B for a sample interview schedule). The questions hoped to elicit the young people's opinions, pre-meeting: on their futures; on their expectations of the meetings; and, in particular, on how they expected to participate within the meetings.

In the ideal fieldwork, all participants would have been interviewed before meetings. Practically, this was difficult for parental interviews and virtually impossible for professional interviews. Each set of Robertson School's FNA meetings was held on one day. Not all parents could be interviewed the day before the meetings: parents would obviously be available for interviewing at widely different locations, which would be difficult to travel to in one, or even two, days/ nights. Because the meetings were scheduled so closely together, parental interviews immediately pre-meetings were given up in preference for parental interviews immediately post-meetings. Parents' views would be affected by the previous meetings, but I would also be able to hear their immediate reflections on the meetings. I deemed this second aspect more useful for my analysis. Interviewing all professionals immediately pre- or post-meetings was obviously not possible in Robertson's tight schedule; with so many meetings on one day, professionals would only have been able to comment in general, rather than individual terms, on the meetings. More individualised information was desired for the

⁶Two young people at Robertson School were not interviewed before their FNA meetings, because they were not at school that day. Relevant questions from the pre-questionnaire were then included in the post-meeting interview. For the Sheldon conferences I was unable to attend, the team leader talked to the young people just before the young people and parent(s) came into the meetings. Two young people did not attend their meetings in Sheldon and were thus not interviewed.

intensive analysis involved, so an immediate questionnaire was preferred. A short written questionnaire for each professional, after each meeting, seemed the most informative but least time-consuming substitute for an oral interview.

The young people's interviews met a very practical goal: an added familiarity of the young people with me, so that they would feel comfortable with my presence in their meetings and with my research. Theoretically, the young people's pre-meeting interviews also had justification. The meetings were ostensibly for the young people—to plan their futures—and thus if anyone's opinions should be central to the research, their opinions should be (see points made on pages vi and 58). Attending the March 1990 FNAs at Robertson School, I had noted how silent the young people were during the meetings. I thus in particular wanted to know what the young people thought independently of the meetings. Parents and professionals were (generally) not as silent during the meetings. Thus for both practical and theoretical reasons, only the young people were interviewed before the meetings.

Interviewing the young people before the meetings might have altered how they acted within, and experienced, the meetings. For example, the interviews in some ways served as preparation to the meetings, for the young people. The interchange between the team leader and Katy Downes, describing the Educational-Vocational meeting's purpose, displays how the interviews could have provided new information to the young people about what would happen at the meetings (see page 103). In certain cases, I did feel that I was providing a 'sounding board' for young people afraid of what might happen in their meetings (for examples, see Gillian Stone's and Traci Miadich's meetings pages 220 and 227) and both Gillian Stone and Traci Miadich described me as a 'friendly face' within their FNA meetings. On the other hand, young people seemed no less or more involved in their FNA meetings between the ones I attended during my 'informal' fieldwork (where no pre-interviews took place) and the ones included in my 'formal' fieldwork. On balance, I felt that the advantages of interviewing young people before the meetings out-weighed the disadvantages of biasing their later actions and experiences.

Parents and young people were interviewed following the meetings. In Scotland, parents were talked with directly after each meeting. The young people were interviewed that afternoon at school. In Sheldon, I went to the most convenient location—be it home, school or work—to talk separately to the young person and her/ his parent(s) the day after the meeting. For the

Sheldon meetings that I could not attend, the team leader interviewed the young people, and then the parents, directly after each meeting.

The post-meeting interviews were based on matching questions for parents and young people (see Appendix B for sample interview schedule). These questions, as in the pre-meeting young people's interviews, aimed to draw out the parents' and young people's reflections on the meetings. The interviews were not kept to a strict structure, but followed-up on interviewees' comments. All questions, however, were eventually asked to each interviewee, with one exception.

Two parents were so emotional after the FNA meeting that expression of their distress seemed a higher priority than answering my neutrally expressed questions. In some ways, this could be justified theoretically: facilitating the parents' expression could be a more informative reflection on the meeting's discourse than structured questions. Further, I felt the parents' need to vent their emotions was more important than my proposed interview. If I imposed my structure on the parents, I would be repeating some of the very criticisms they had of the meeting—that they had been forced into an agenda and their own views ignored. Indeed, the transcript from this interview is very informative about the meeting.

Matching questions to those asked in the parental and young people's interviews were asked on the professionals' post-meeting questionnaires (see Appendix B for professionals' questionnaire). These questionnaires solicited professionals' views on the individual meetings. The written format, as already mentioned, was necessary due to the successive scheduling of the FNA meetings. FNA professionals tended to write less comprehensive answers than EV professionals, which was partially attributable to the small amount of time between FNA meetings and the greater comprehensiveness of the EV meetings. To complement these written questionnaires, interviews were held with the professionals during the following months (see Appendix B for sample interview schedules). These interviews asked generally about each professional's perception of her/ his role within the meetings, her/ his views on the meetings, and specific reflections on ideas developed from data observation and analysis.

Matching questions were asked to all participants not only to gather a comprehensive view, but also to see if answers differed between young people, parents and professionals. If divisions existed, they would provide hints as to how the different groups contributed to the collaborations, the

conceptualisations of the 'transitional problem' and how the problem would be addressed.

Post-meeting questions (whether interviews with young people, parents or professionals, or written questionnaires by professionals) always first asked questions that tried to be neutral: that is, they did not aim to elicit either criticism or praise of the meetings. When participants in interviews raised criticisms of the meetings, I did often follow-up their comments with additional questions to elicit more details about their criticisms. At the **end** of interviews with two EV young people and their parents, I did ask them whether the number of professional participants and the set-up of the meetings had affected them in any way. I asked these EV young people and parents because they had not raised these issues themselves, whereas FNA young people and parents had done so without any such directed questioning; I wished to know the EV young people's and parents' views for comparative purposes (see page 85).

Professionals were asked in the interviews (versus in their post-meeting questionnaires) to state the advantages and disadvantages of the meetings. Again, criticism raised by the professionals was often followed-up for greater elaboration. Later in the interview, I raised results or interpretations from my data—such as how FNA and EV meetings differed in assigning responsibility to young people for decisions' implementation—for professionals' comments. Answers to these questions are flagged within the following chapters. Such questions, though, were **always asked after** the more balanced questions had been asked. I was as interested in hearing positive comments about the meetings as I was to hear about negative ones, because both types of comments could be useful in comparing the two types of meetings.

One comparative issue is the change of the term 'decision' used in the FNA questionnaires, to the term 'recommendation' used in the EV questionnaires. Each term was the one used in its respective site: that is, FNA meeting participants spoke of 'decisions' and EV meeting participants generally spoke of 'recommendations'. Instead of forcing participants to use an unfamiliar reference, this distinction was used as an element of analysis.

All interviews combined some techniques especially valued by discourse analysts. Since the interviewer cannot practically be a neutral constant across interviews—as an interview is a particular situation and a particular interaction—the interviewer actively participates in the interaction (for example, see Mischler 1986). I did not hold to a strict interview structure,

but rather encouraged participants to develop their own thoughts and proceed at their own pace. I questioned statements and explored contradictions within interviews. I asked participants to reflect on my own developing ideas: ideas based on on-going fieldwork and data analysis. All interviews were audio-taped, as complete transcription of both the interviewer's and interviewee's words facilitates an investigation of both sides of the interaction. Such a methodology lessened the problems of the team leader replacing me as interviewer, for certain EV meetings. I considered my own interaction with those I interviewed, just as I considered the team leader's interaction with those he interviewed. In fact, such consideration led to certain interpretations of potential interest (for example, see page 103).

5) Examining Written Documents

The last component of my fieldwork involved reading the meetings' written discourse. All reports taken to the meetings by professionals and all reports, minutes or letters written as a direct result of the meetings were read. Particular attention was paid as to how these reports reflected on and represented the meetings. The documentation also provided information on the procedures of the meetings. For example, whether certain decisions were followed-up from FNA meetings could be traced within professionals' files.

For the FNA meetings, the written discourse was collected from each professional participant. Documents brought to the meetings generally included past notes on FNA meetings. Medical personnel brought the full files of the young people; specialist careers officers brought their folders containing not only past FNA meeting notes, but any other correspondence about the young people and notes on interviews. The careers teacher brought hand-written notes on what the school staff had said about the young people.

FNA professional participants kept their own records of the meetings (since there were no official minutes resulting from the Robertson School's FNAs), either noting down information relevant to their role in particular, or more general meeting minutes. On a less individual level, the school sent out half page memos on each meeting to the medical staff and the social work representative. These records were constructed by the head- and careers teachers. The educational psychologist attending each FNA2 meeting should send a memo to regional head-quarters on the meeting's decisions. Thereafter, the regional psychologist should send a letter to the parent(s) stating these

decisions. Copies of these letters should be sent to other involved professionals.

The EV team members brought their written reports to the EV meetings. The team leader wrote notes at the meetings and then dictated, on the basis of these notes, minutes of the meetings. These minutes were sent to the young people. Both the individual reports and meetings' summaries were read for the research.

Nature of the Data

The fieldwork data divided into four main forms—meetings' procedures, observational data (when available) and spoken and written discourse—gathered in four ways—audio-taping meetings, interviews/questionnaires, reading of documents and attending meetings.

Table D: Main Forms of Discourse and Ways Gathered

	audio-taping meetings	interviews/ questionnaires	reading documents	attending & observing meetings
procedures	x	x	x	x
observational data (when available)				x
spoken discourse	x	x		x
written discourse		x (professionals)	x	

First Stage of Analysis: Organising the Material

As stated previously, audio-taping the meeting was the primary method chosen to gather data on spoken discourse. Deborah Tannen points out that such capturing of people's speech for analysis creates an object out of proportion to the actual impact the people may have had in the situation (1984 p.34). Talk's very essence is its disappearance as soon as it is uttered; listeners can imperfectly reconstruct talk, but cannot retrieve it. Recording

makes a permanent and fairly precise reproduction of what was originally a transient event. (1984 p.35) Tannen's caveat impacts on what claims will be made. We are all responsible for what we say and its effect. But the quickness of interactive talk usually requires the speedy access of social discourse(s). Often, on reflection, people may wish they had not used the words that they did. Hopefully, the analysis of speech can facilitate our reflections so we can be more aware of what we do and say in the speed of talk. We can then make positive change, based on our heightened awareness of our interactions, without laying blame on individuals. (Such personalised blaming typically leads to defensive attitudes rather than fundamental change in individuals.)

On a practical level, taping the meetings could not provide a perfect record of the spoken discourse. The audio-tapes were not able to pick up all nuances of speech; when people spoke at the same time, some words became unclear. Transcribing the tapes posed a whole array of difficulties. Representing spoken discourse on the page required many decisions. For example, the over-lapping of the interaction can be crucial data. Written discourse, however, proceeds down the page and conventionally only written explanations tell the reader that, say, two speakers are speaking at once (see Appendix C for conventions used in transcription). Great attention was placed on the transcription, with the record being checked with the audio-tapes several times for errors. Pertinent portions of an audio-tape chosen for analysis were re-heard several times, in order to search out any significant aspects not captured by the transcription. Such aspects were then included in the description of the discourse.

The interviews were also completely transcribed from the audio-tapes. On the basis of answers to my questionnaires, participants' comments were placed in certain categories. Some numerical comparisons were made across meetings (such as how many people said they were satisfied with the decisions). While such categorisation was obviously my own interpretation, the exercise provided some useful overall comparisons to juxtapose against other data from the meetings.

The written documents were accessed through the various professionals. All spoken data had been gathered by that point, and the written documents were viewed with certain conclusions ready to be challenged. (For example, see next page.)

Data on the meetings' procedures were gathered from all sources: through observing the meetings (how were the chairs set-up? what was the

scheduling of the day?), from considering required documents and procedures based on various government acts and official guidelines, charting what documents and procedures were in fact produced and followed, and considering how procedures were carried out within the meetings. Interviewing professionals about general procedures and participant roles provided reflections on my findings.

Second Stage of Analysis: Interpreting the Material

The questionnaires, interviews, observations and written documents, as has been mentioned, were all used to reflect on the meetings' discourse and procedures. To trace one example, some participants felt that FNA2 meetings were about planning and making certain decisions. In the meetings' audio-tapes, the sections where young people's futures were planned and decisions made became a focus of attention. What happened in the meetings was then compared to the questions, "*What decisions were made at the meeting?*" and, "*Who is responsible for doing something about these decisions?*" asked to all participants. What was written down in the various documents about decisions was also compared to what was said in the meetings. Legislation and guidelines were examined for aspects that required or suggested meetings should be (or not be) about planning and making certain decisions. The same procedure was followed with the Sheldon data. I tentatively concluded that, in Robertson School's FNAs, little consensus existed on what decisions had been made and who was responsible for them, while in Sheldon participants expressed a slightly greater consensus on what recommendations had been made and who was responsible for them. These findings were then fed back through subsequent interviews with (some of the) participants. Their reactions to, and their explanations of, these findings were requested. At this point, my ideas began to solidify.

What I considered significant in the data represented my interests and research questions, largely formed by my literature review, and previous research and personal experience. The questionnaires had specific thematic concerns in mind when constructed, such as what items were addressed in decisions/ recommendations, and young people's participation and empowerment. While trying to remain open to possibilities, I obviously had my own conception of the 'transitional problem' (see Preface and Chapter Two), which I compared to this research's observations and analysis.

Early on in my initial analysis, I considered whether meetings differed on a gender basis. I asked whether female clients would be given different options from male clients, and if the young women were listened less than the men. Glaring differences were not observed: for example, women were encouraged to work with tools and men to do secretarial work; professionals' attention to clients' views did not seem dependent on the clients' gender. Professionals involved were typically women, but both people chairing the meetings were men. Other meetings informally attended (see pages 74-75), however, were chaired by women. The most glaring issues did not seem affected by whether women chaired the meetings. A gender divide was not clear between female and male professionals. Certain female professionals contributed significantly more and seemed to persuade others, while other female professionals did not take on such a dominant role. Mothers were more likely to attend meetings than fathers. No fathers attended EV meetings; only one father attended a FNA meeting without the mother, and the three other fathers attending came with their spouses. Fathers appeared to present a similar range of verbal contributions as mothers, and the effects of their speech seemed within the same range as well.⁷ I would certainly agree with the argument that the data could be analysed on a gender basis, but other issues seemed even more immediate and significant.

In certain ways, the research's results can be extrapolated to young people with other than physical disabilities (for example, young people who only have learning or emotional difficulties). The young people who participated in this work did have a range of disabilities and few only had physical disabilities. As stated on page 72, the particularities of young people's disabilities did affect the specific content of the meetings but generally did not seem to influence the way the meetings proceeded. Discussing the differences between meetings on the basis of young people's type of disability did not seem the most salient distinction to make. On the other hand, all young people who participated in this research were physically able to voice their opinions if they so wished, and all had talked to me in interviews. Some young people with disabilities might not have been able to do so—for example, some young people with autism or with more complicated learning difficulties. For these reasons, the case study and its conclusions on

⁷Couples participating in the fieldwork did, as a pair, speak less than individual parents. In meetings informally attended, however, two couples in particular were extremely vocal.

young people's involvement can more appropriately be generalised for young people with physical disabilities than for all young people with disabilities. How the young people with more complicated communication difficulties are and can be involved in transitional planning is a worthwhile research question, but it was not one addressed by this research.

Ideally, full transcripts should be available within the text. In my case, the transcripts were both too long and confidential to be presented in entirety. Relevant portions of the transcripts were included within the text, or references made within the text to the relevant appendices. Material perceived as crucial was thus often provided for the reader.

Regularity of certain features might or might not be an issue in the analysis, depending on the interpretations made. Jacobs explains:

*Claims about structure can be supported by making claims about regular patterning in conversation. But claims about structure can also be grounded in claims about the intelligibility of patterns and in structural possibilities. These latter claims are not simply illustrated by examples drawn from a corpus, but in an important sense these claims are **demonstrated** by the display of those examples, individually or collectively. (1990 p.245)*

Deliberately using a particular case to display a pattern hardly affected the intelligibility of the pattern to be seen in that particular case (Jacobs 1990, p.246). The analysis did not (necessarily) rely on repeated observations but on "convergent lines of analysis" resulting from different types of observations (Jacobs 1990, p.244). So, even if an event only occurred once, the reactions of the participants observed in the meeting and through the discourse(s), the response of participants after the meeting, and/ or the written discourse might all point to the significance of that event. In fact, the event might be significant simply because it did not occur regularly: for example, how a disagreement between participants was (not) resolved within a meeting dedicated to preserving consensus.

Intensive case study analysis thrives on counter-examples. Could the interpretation explain why these counter-examples did not fit its pattern? Could the interpretation explain why some cases were fringe cases? Alternative interpretations should be considered. Why was this interpretation preferred to alternatives? At particularly important points, diverse examples were displayed that, despite their internal diversity, showed the pattern of the interpretation.

Selection bias was a potential problem. That is, were all examples collected in a self-confirming fashion, so that falsifying examples were excluded by the very method of fieldwork? All types of researchers, not only those doing case studies, face this problem. In this research, the meetings represent complete sets available at the time based on the time-frame of fieldwork (see page 75). So at the level of meetings no selection was made. As to what examples from the data were included in a particular claim, all examples **recognised** as relating to a claim were considered. Disconfirming examples were actively sought from the data and reported. But certain pieces of data, which ultimately might undermine a particular claim, may not have had their potential recognised. I thus would encourage other researchers to try actively to falsify any particular claims, either through repeating the fieldwork or by approaching the subject matter differently. (Jackson 1986; Jacobs 1986)

A check on my FNA findings and conclusions was provided by M. Hubbard's thesis (1992), which was only read after this work was completely drafted. Her findings and conclusions were vastly similar to those found in this research.

Note on Naming Conventions

Within the following chapters, certain conventions are used in naming participants. Professionals are referred to by first names. Young people are referred to by both first and last names (except when reporting dialogues for meetings, where whichever combination of first and last names was used by participants is followed). Parents are referred to as 'Mrs' or 'Mr' followed by the surname that matches their child's surname.

CHAPTER SIX: PURPOSES OF THE MEETINGS

According to research on inter-disciplinary meetings, participants' lack of consensus of a meeting's purpose can lead to the failure of the meeting (Fenton et al. 1979, pp.638-639; Ysseldyke et al. 1982, p.312). For example, Kennedy and Wassell criticise Future Needs Assessment (FNA) meetings for failing to facilitate young people's transition; they cite professional participants' lack of consensus on transitional goals as a key reason for the meetings' failures (see pages 36 and 38). Such conclusions could be accused of accepting a rationalist model of decision-making that is an unrealistic description of how meetings function (Hunter 1979). In reality, how often are meetings' purposes openly discussed, debated and agreed upon? Are meetings that lack a consensus on purposes judged any less successful by their participants than meetings that have a consensus? If individual participants have complementary purposes, then evaluations of the meetings' success may not depend on an agreed purpose. If individual participants perceive contradictory purposes of the meetings, however, then individuals are likely to have different evaluations of success, depending on whether their expectations are satisfied or not.

Descriptions of the FNA and Educational-Vocational (EV) meetings' purposes up to this point have been heavily biased towards certain professionals' descriptions (see pages 27 and 30). Did other participants have alternative descriptions of the meetings' purposes? If there were alternative descriptions, were they complementary or contradictory?

Further, mapping out alternative descriptions now provides a platform from which to consider young people's involvement, decision-making and satisfaction later in the analysis. Exploring participants' descriptions of the meetings' purposes provides both an introduction and an overview to the FNA and EV meetings.

In analysing participants' descriptions, I sought to find a framework that could apply to both types of meetings. Such a common framework would allow easy comparison between the two meeting types. When I consciously tried to do this, however, I felt the data were being heavily forced to fit categories (an interesting statement on the meetings' different approaches to the 'transitional problem'). I therefore stayed close to the data in considering each type of meeting separately, and emerged with two different frameworks.

Later in the comparative section, possible overlaps as well as differences between the two frameworks are raised.

The frameworks are artificial grids I placed on the data as a means to aid understanding. The categories are largely induced from patterns I noted within the data, although some sub-categories have a more deductive basis catalysed by perceived exceptions within the data. Certain purposes fit more neatly into categories than others, and certain descriptions may arguably have a place in more than one category. Nevertheless, the frameworks did allow me to extract patterns and aberrations within the data and provided a wedge with which to prise open the discourse of the meetings' purposes.

“What were the FNA Meetings for?”

The following analysis is based on four different sources, which described the FNA meetings' purpose(s):

- 1) young people's interview responses;
- 2) parents' interview responses;
- 3) professionals' interview responses; and
- 4) legislation and guidelines.

In individual interviews, one of my concluding questions asked young people and parents what they thought the FNA meetings were for. Young people tended to answer succinctly and quickly (although three of thirteen young people said they did not know what the meetings were for). Parents' replies were usually more extensive than the young people's, and seven of sixteen parents made unexpected criticisms of the meetings. Professionals were similarly asked in individual interviews, “*What is the purpose of the FNA meetings?*” Professionals' answers were more varied in content and typically more extensive than either young people's or parents' answers.

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended introduces education authorities' duty as follows:

Section 65B–(1) It shall be the duty of an education authority in accordance with this section to consider in relation to each recorded child belonging to their area ... what provision would benefit him after he ceases to be of school age and to make a report thereon.

Colburne Education Authority guidelines interpreted this legal mandate as follows:

***PURPOSE:** To enable the Education Authority to consider the range of possible provision, including continued school education, which would benefit a recorded pupil after he ceases to be of compulsory school age.¹*

The Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 has a similar statement about local authorities' social work departments' duty:

Part III 13-(4) ... it shall be the duty of that [local] authority to make an assessment of the needs of that child or young person with respect to the provision by the authority of any statutory services for that person in accordance with the welfare enactments ... and make a report thereon.

These initial statements are taken to be descriptions of the FNAs' purpose, for the legislation and guidelines' 'source'.

The FNA Framework

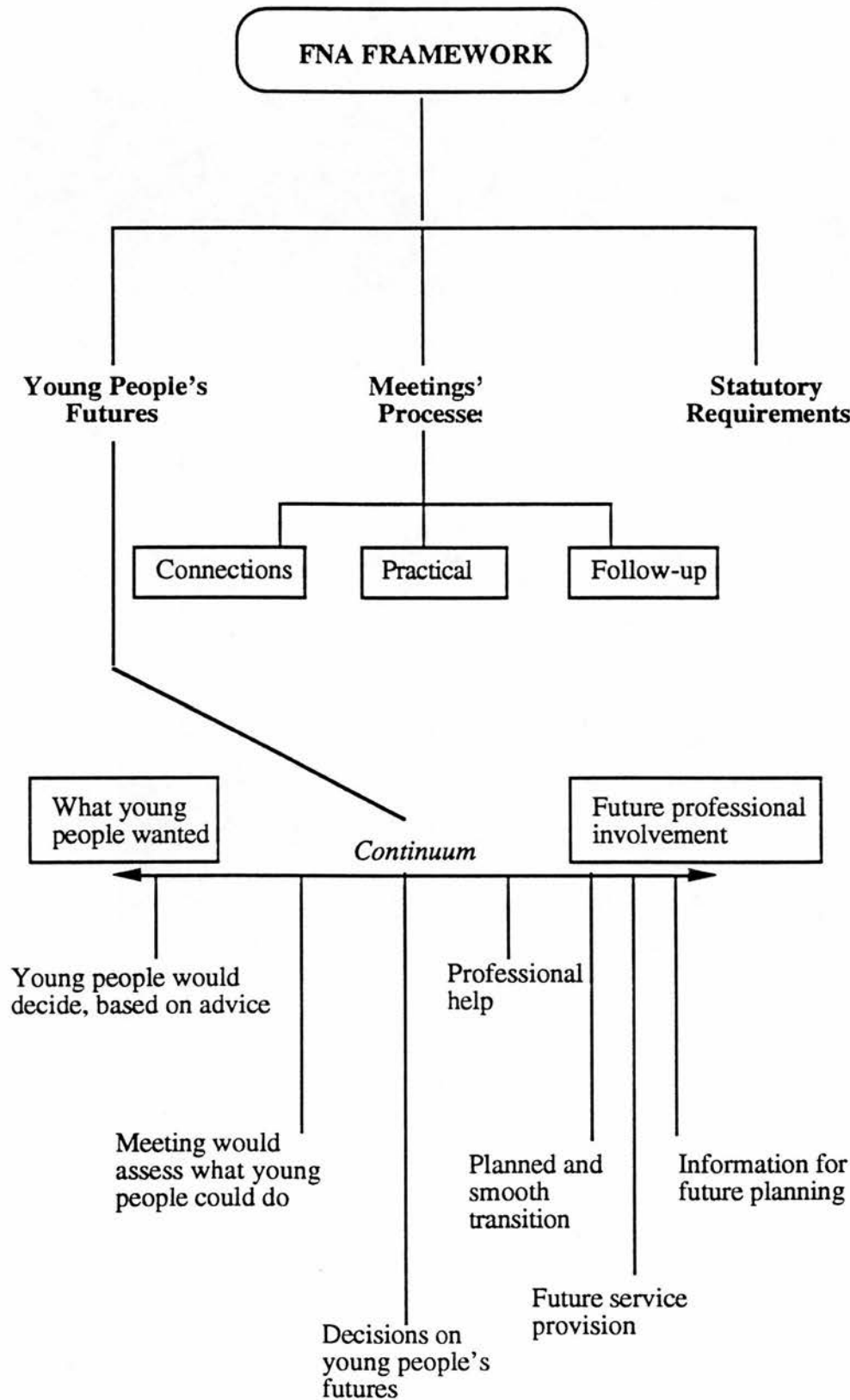
The descriptions posed a wide range of FNA meetings' goals². How, then, can these goals be understood?

Broadly, they are categorised into three groups. First, goals are grouped together that referred to the young people's futures. These included: making decisions about the young people's futures; and continued professional help when the young people left school. The second group of goals pertains to processes of the meeting. Rather than being concerned with the actual 'facts'—i.e. those related to the young people's futures—these goals referred to the meetings' procedures. This category contains such goals as bringing people together and sharing information. The last category of goals is termed 'statutory requirements'. Producing a report in order to fulfil a legislative requirement, for example, is included in this last category. (See Diagram E, next page, for a pictorial description of this framework.)

¹Since the time of this fieldwork, Colburne Education Authority has issued new guidelines on the FNA process.

²While 'goals' and 'purposes' are not exactly synonymous terms, they are used interchangeably in this chapter due to the awkwardness of the term 'purposes'.

Diagram E: A Way to Understand Sources' Accounts of the Purpose of FNA Meetings



- *The young people's futures*

A wide variety of goals can be subsumed under this general category of goals. Rather than construct a tree diagram—with a general category at the top and roots of sub-categories—I ordered the goals along a continuum. Using a continuum hopefully underlines the movability and closeness of statements, in contrast to the distance implied by discrete sub-categories on a tree diagram. On this 'future' goals continuum, I labelled two extremes: at one end, those goals that emphasised what **young people wanted to do** in their futures; at the other end, those goals that emphasised **future professional involvement**. (See Diagram E, previous page)

Young people predominantly voiced descriptions based on what they wanted to do in the future. Such descriptions can be divided into two types. On one hand, the meetings were seen to have an advisory remit and the young people would decide (some time after the meetings?) what they wanted to do in the future. This decision would be **helped** by the professional participants but the decision would not be made by them. On the other hand, some descriptions suggested that what young people wanted would be **evaluated** at the meetings, and these evaluations would be translated into decisions. Young people might or might not be involved in these decisions but they were implied recipients of evaluation. Young people's descriptions particularly indicated that what they wanted would be under perusal (five of thirteen young people).

Next on the continuum are a small number of goals aimed at making decisions about what young people were going to do in the future—with no mention of what young people wanted nor of service provision. The category can be considered to occupy the middle of the continuum, as goals concerning the future but representing neither of the two extremes.

The following three sub-categories can be viewed from their emphasis on future professional involvement rather than what young people wanted. In the first sub-category, the meetings would orchestrate professional 'help' for the young people's futures. Mrs Mitchell provided an illustrative example in her interview:

*I feel now he's going to get the type of help **he** needs. I can't always be right, and get him in the right direction. But people who are out there in the profession can see better than I can.*

Professional help was clearly labelled as what her son needed in contrast to Mrs Mitchell's own lack of knowledge. The help was connected with John's 'needs' (and not his 'wants') indicating some 'objective' (i.e. professional?) assessment of John. This construction can be considered the inverse of advising young people. The goal of advising young people had **young people** making decisions based on professional suggestions. Especially when Mrs Mitchell's statements were considered in the fuller context of her answer, **professionals** would be making decisions about what John would do.

Professional involvement was heavily emphasised in the next sub-category of 'future' goals: termed a 'planned and smooth transition'. My inclusion of the sub-category was influenced less by frequency than by Louise's account. She described what the meetings were trying to **prevent**:

... it used to be very ragged, when our youngsters left at sixteen, as they used to do. As to what provision was next. And hopefully to try and make something carry on, rather than them sit at home before somebody says, 'Gosh what is this person doing? Where where should they be?' And ah, normally the progression is to college. But occasionally it's to social work department provision or something like that ...

Louise's description suggested that the goal for a 'planned and smooth transition' was a response to previous service delivery failures. Such a description parallels much of the literature calling for inter-disciplinary meetings (see pages 2 and 37). Interestingly, few participants described the meetings by what they were working **against** and instead what the meetings were **for**. Participants did seem to have opinions on what the meetings should positively accomplish and not just what they would avoid.

The most extreme sub-category on the continuum contains goals referring to future service provision, with no mention of what young people wanted for their futures. Legislation and guidelines were written solely in terms of provision—what the Local Authorities would provide from their services. The authorities were the actors, because they would be 'considering' the appropriate provision. The authorities would be assessing the young people and deciding what would benefit the young people; the young people were the objects of these assessments, not the actors.

A small minority of interview responses indicated a goal of gathering information for service representatives to plan for the future. Here, professionals would be the actors as they would be gathering the information for future planning. Two of these statements were expressed in negative

terms: i.e., the meetings failed to reach this goal of helping services to plan resources.

- *The processes of the meetings*

A much smaller range of goals can be clustered by their orientation towards the meetings' processes. Rather than addressing the subject matter of the meetings, these goals focused on **how** the meetings functioned. I divided this category into three sections:

- 1) 'connections': goals of bringing people together and inter-disciplinary work;
- 2) 'practical': exchange of information, assessments, decisions/ plans and discussion; and
- 3) 'follow-up' of the meetings' decisions.

Bringing people together was a strong pattern in many descriptions. Louise provided the most succinct example: *"So I really think it's ..., a meeting of everybody involved with that youngster, isn't it?"* Sarah's answer provided one explanation of what this goal was arguing **against**. In her interview, she reinforced her goal of bringing people together:

But it's it's sort of gets everybody together, I suppose the idea is that um, we're not all working at cross purposes. That we're all working with the same eventual aim in mind.

People would be brought together so that they would work co-operatively rather than towards competing ends.

Sarah's statements might suggest a co-operative, rather than a collaborative, approach. Instead of individuals working **together**, each contributing pieces to a single project, work would be done individually. Each individual would check that they were working towards the same eventual aim. This speculation has some support in Eddie's account of the meetings, where the meetings were held just to *"... fulfil the statute. Really. And the fine-tuning is carried off to other little fora of the appropriate people."* The actual work of forming the *"best package"* (to use Chris' own words) was not carried out within the meetings. The meetings ensured that people were co-operating, and collaboration might occur elsewhere. On the other hand, the phrase 'multi-disciplinary team' suggests collaboration rather than co-operation. Notably, few descriptions (three) used this phrase.

Who were the people to be brought together? Louise's words provided some description: everybody who was 'involved' with the young

person. Her statement did not illuminate precisely who these people were, nor what were the criteria for being considered 'involved'. Nevertheless, a number of people were implied, connected by mutual involvement in (presumably) the FNA system. Using the phrase 'multi-disciplinary team' was somewhat more explicit. The term 'multi-disciplinary' suggested professional expertise as a criterion for membership. Would parents and young people thus be included on the professional team? If they were included, would they be full members? These questions were left unanswered in the descriptions.

A large number of goals can be subsumed under the section termed 'practical' procedures of the meetings. As was perhaps clear from the quotes provided above, bringing people together was typically connected with the goal of sharing information. The process of assessment was a more contentious goal. One professional began her account with a strong emphasis on assessment: *"The purpose is to look at how the youngster is functioning at this time. Right? Across a whole eh range of parameters."* Another professional, however, reacted strongly to my use of the word 'assessment' in our interview:

- Kay ... How do you see the purpose of the Future Needs Assessment meetings?
- Colin () I suppose I react in part to the word 'assessment'. ...
 Because I think by the time you've got to that stage, particularly the second meeting, or I suppose more particularly the meetings immediately preceding their ah leaving school and going on to another setting that by that time it should definitely have all happened, and if we're still assessing at that stage, then something's far wrong

While Colin's account provided a place for assessment³, he stressed that its place should not be continual and central to the meetings. His strong response to my wording suggested that drawing out the period of assessment was a potential problem of the meetings. In fact, a goal might be **not** to perpetuate assessment. Colin's answer later promoted the development of "*fairly clear ideas*" on how the young people's needs were going to be met. The importance of assessment was diminished, in Colin's response, and the goal of making decisions/ plans promoted.

³FNA participants appeared to use the term 'assessment' consistently throughout the fieldwork: a testing procedure based on either formal tests or a professional's interpretation of the young person's situation.

Making decisions/ plans brought down my neat division between goals about the 'young people's futures' and goals oriented towards the meetings' processes. Goals articulating the requirement to make decisions and plans have been largely covered in the above discussion of young people's futures. Goals only referring to decisions/ plans, and not to the young people's futures, were considerably rarer. (See page 93.)

Considering the attention dedicated to bringing people together, sharing information and making decisions, I expected also to find extensive references to discussion. I expected discussion to be the means of 'considering' what future provision should be (according to statutory and guideline requirements) or making decisions (according to other descriptions). Surprisingly, such references were largely absent. The verb 'discuss' or the noun 'discussion' was found only in two descriptions. The first example used 'discussion' as a positive expectation of the meetings: "... *to have some discussion of what areas need to be developed over the next year*" (Clive). The other example, however, was perhaps more illuminating. Mrs Smith criticised the meetings for not matching her expectations:

I didn't see the point in coming. [Mrs Smith laughed] I thought there'd be more discussion, and things. Nobody seems to know very much, and, just really what the teacher and the doctor say, but. () Nothing. I thought they'd discuss, you know, what he was capable of, and maybe trying to get him wee jobs, that that would.

Mrs Smith's comments showed that the 'discussion' goal was a possible one, and that its absence might have a particular significance for how the FNA meetings proceeded in practice.

Discussion might be implied within other descriptions. Two descriptions did contain references to bringing people together and 'encouraging' parents or 'refining' ideas. The Education Authority's duty 'to consider' might be interpreted as requiring discussion (but the term does not promise it). Even when actively looking for such implied examples, I found it difficult to extract these three. Certainly, I could say that a discourse using terms such as 'discuss', 'discussion' or even 'talk' was largely absent from the descriptions. The goal of discussion might be an understood one of the meetings, but it was rarely one directly stated.

Little attention was placed on follow-up of the meetings. Only once was 'follow-up' specifically mentioned. This professional did so in relation to explaining the FNA3s: "*There isn't strictly a thing as a FN3 formally set out,*

it's just because we knew that we've got to follow up." Follow-up, according to this statement, was not an integral part of the meetings' structures. Rather, 'we'—the professionals?—knew that they should do so. A contrast was made between the formal structure of the meetings and what 'we' decided to do.

- **Statutory requirements**

Guidelines and legislation were understandably emphatic about the legal requirements of the meetings. The documents were phrased in relation to the duties of the respective authorities and decisions about what provision would be provided by which agencies.

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended contained two requirements in its initial section referring to the FNA meetings (Section 65B-(1)). First, the education authority must 'consider' beneficial provision. Second, the education authority must make a report based on these considerations. Part of the education authority's report should be the results of the social work department's Section 13 assessment, according to the Disabled Persons Act 1986. The only two participants of the FNA meeting who mentioned the report(s) did so in terms of failure. Alison, for example, criticised: *"For FN2, we are supposed to in fact produce a report that gets circulated around. It's not a very good report, I don't think."* Considering that the meetings were statutory requirements, the absence of mention about such requirements and related goals, within participants' descriptions, was unexpected. While legislation and guidelines understandably focused on statutory requirements, the absence of a goal requiring production of reports might indicate a divide between the legislative and guidelines' statements of the meetings' purposes, and participants'.

Some people were more effusive on one topic that might relate to the requirements. Certain references were made throughout the descriptions about the **failure** of the meetings to match the FNAs' 'model' or 'spirit'. The 'model' might refer to the guidelines and legislation. The 'spirit' might refer to the original rationale for the guidelines and legislation.

Sources

Four sources of information were named at the beginning of this discussion: the interview responses of the young people, parents and professionals; and legislation's/ guidelines' introductory paragraphs. Some

numerical comments were woven into the above discussion, but were used more to establish general patterns than differences amongst sources. How, then, did the sources compare and differ numerically in articulating certain goals?

The category of goals pertaining to the young people's futures can be found across all sources. The distribution of the sub-categories along the continuum, however, differs significantly:

- When young people provided an account of the meetings' purpose, the majority of their descriptions clustered at the end of the continuum where young people's wants were emphasised (nine of thirteen young people).
- Parents' answers can be grouped slightly further along the continuum as they tended to refer to future professional help (eight of sixteen parents). Two of these references to help were explicitly negative: that is, the parents voiced dissatisfaction with the help that was offered.
- Professionals' descriptions are spread out along the continuum, but more heavily weighted towards the service delivery end. Five answers each can be placed within goals of providing provision and a 'planned and smooth transition'. (Fourteen professionals were interviewed)
- Legislation and guidelines did not refer to young people's futures, but to future provision.

Different sources do appear to dominate certain portions of the continuum. Professionals' and legislation/ guidelines' descriptions emphasised provision and service delivery. Young people's and parents' descriptions stressed young people's wishes and professional help respectively.

Young people made no references to the meetings' processes in their descriptions (beyond their expectation of decisions and assessment). Parents only referred to the meetings' processes in negative terms (three of sixteen parents), beyond those who talked of making decisions about the young people's futures. The legislation made no reference to the meetings' processes. The guidelines were largely composed of the meetings' processes; the statement heading the guidelines (see page 91), however, made scant reference to processes.

Professionals' descriptions, on the other hand, were replete with references to the meetings' processes. Amongst fourteen professionals' descriptions, six made reference to bringing people together, eight to sharing information, and five to assessment. Three professionals made some reference to a 'multi-disciplinary' team; one professional raised the necessity for follow-up; one professional specifically mentioned 'discussion'.

While the legislation and guidelines understandably highlighted the statutory and bureaucratic requirements for the FNA meetings, the other sources made scant reference to such requirements. Only two professionals spoke in terms of statutory responsibilities. The report was the implied culmination of the FNAs', within the education legislation. Only two professionals' descriptions mentioned the reports, and both did so in terms of failure. Similarly, three professionals' descriptions made comparisons between the reality of the meetings and the 'model' or 'spirit'. All three comparisons were negative, i.e., that the meetings failed to match the 'model' or 'spirit'. For the large part, the participants' descriptions made little reference to either statutory or bureaucratic requirements.

The following generalisations can be made about what goals the sources emphasised:

- Young people tended to define the meetings' purpose in terms of making decisions about what they wanted to do in the future.
- Professional help for the young people's futures was the predominant goal of parents' accounts.
- Goals referred to within professionals' accounts are spread out amongst the first two categories: goals pertaining to the young people's futures, and to the meetings' processes.
- Legislation and guidelines perhaps understandably emphasised statutory requirements. The guidelines were predominantly concerned with the meetings' processes, but the introductory account made no mention of these processes. Both the legislation and the guidelines made no reference to young people's wishes for the future and instead emphasised provision.

The sources present a somewhat divided picture of the meetings' purposes. The sharpest division appears between the participants' and the legislation/guidelines' descriptions. Young people rarely mentioned future professional involvement, or the whole category of the meetings' processes, unlike the professionals and (to a lesser extent) the parents.

“What were the EV Meetings for?”

Interviews with young people, parents and professionals form the basis of the following framework. As a voluntary service, EV meetings were neither mandated nor structured by legislation or formal guidelines.

Young people and parents were individually asked to define the purpose of the meetings, in interviews either before or after the meetings. The team leader carried out the interviews for three of the young people and their parents; I carried out interviews with two of the young people and their parents. Two young people and parents did not attend the meetings, and were thus not interviewed (see pages 78-82 for further details of interviewing).

I asked all professional participants in our interviews to describe the EV meetings' purpose. These professionals included members of the Young Adult and Adolescent team, as well as two outside educationalists who attended three out of seven of the meetings. The professionals tended to answer with extensive and diverse descriptions.

The EV Framework

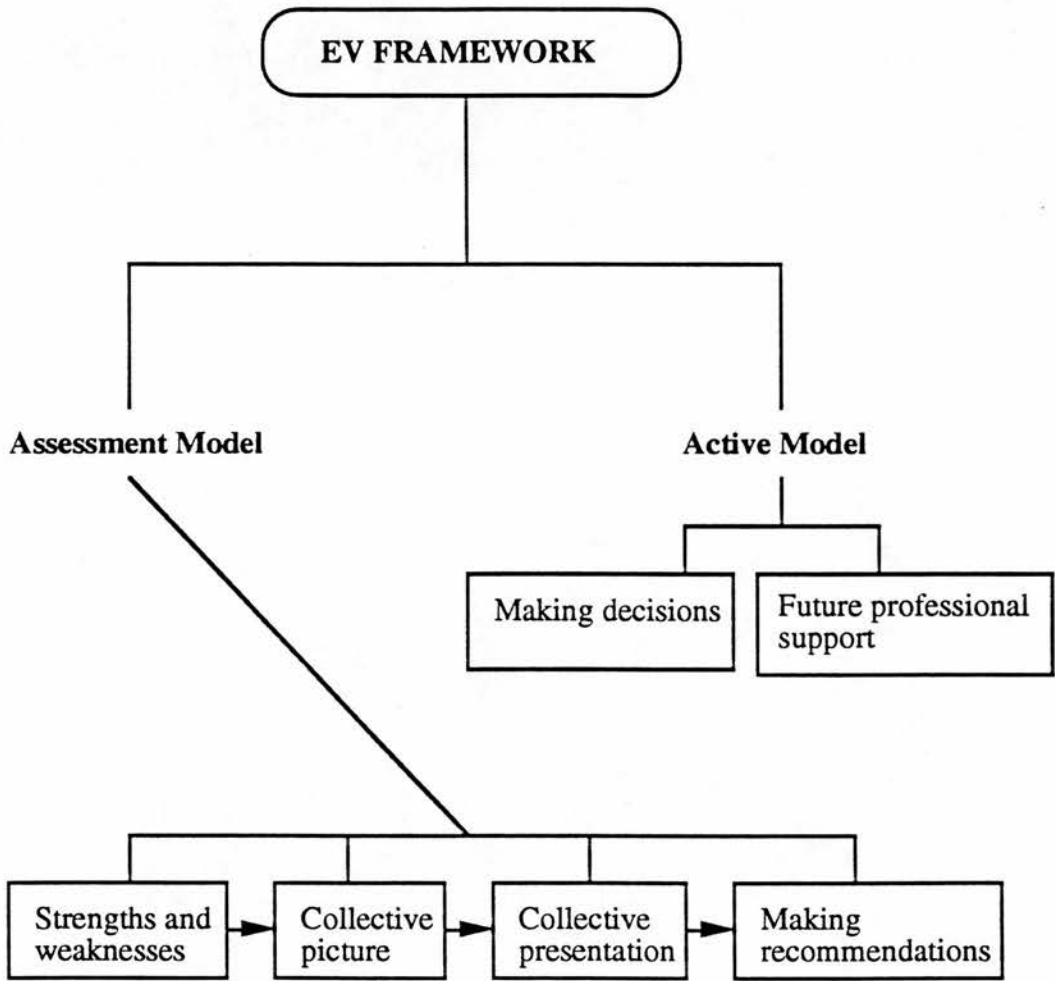
Liz described two possible orientations of the EV meetings:

... You know, it might be that in the future we might move towards, for lack of a better word, 'treatment' model or more of an active involvement, ah, in the transition, more than assessment.

Liz's statement surprised me. When I first arrived to do fieldwork in Sheldon, various team members had strongly stated that the meetings could only fulfil an 'assessment' role. Yet, here was a team member voicing the possibility of a more 'active' involvement. Liz's statement reminded me that considering what a discourse was arguing **against** illuminated the original discourse itself. Further, Liz's statement demonstrated to me that a more 'active' model might be articulated within participants' descriptions—even among EV team members'.

In considering the descriptions, the two models do appear to be a useful grid to understand the articulated goals. A variety of responses, as expected, seem to emphasise an assessment model. A logical progression was articulated in some descriptions: from reporting the results of assessments (strengths and weaknesses) to making recommendations based on these findings. Recommendations **advised** that certain actions took place, but did not promise any action. On the other hand, a less orderly—but nonetheless present—range of goals does seem to emphasise a more 'active' model. Such goals as making decisions and future professional support are included in this category. In contrast to recommendations, decisions did promise future **action**. (See Diagram F, next page, for a pictorial description of the EV framework.)

Diagram F: A Way to Understand Sources' Accounts of the Purpose of EV Meetings



'Is the 'active' model really so discontinuous from the 'assessment' model? Or can it be considered a possible extension or a difference in emphasis? Logically, the 'assessment' model can be the first step and the 'active' model a continuation. Certain goals—such as future professional help—can be applied to either model, depending on the phrasing.

On the other hand, Liz's statement displayed the potential choice between the two models. My own learning process about the EV teamsuggested a possible tension between the two. A further example was displayed in Mark's exchange with Katy Downes:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Mark | <i>What is your understanding of what we're trying to do?</i> |
| Katy Downes | <i>[Katy Downes laughed] Um. Basically to help me understand my strengths and my weaknesses, and to try and help me overcome my weaknesses. And to basically help me fit in stuff that would suit me and my disability.</i> |
| Mark | <i>OK. That's fairly clear. Our goal isn't quite that dogmatic to say that you have to do this or fit what we do. What we do is make recommendations.</i> |

Katy Downes' statement combined both the 'assessment' and 'active' models. She included herself in the activity—**Katy** would understand, **Katy** would overcome and **Katy** would fit in, with professional help. When listening to the interview, Mark quickly spoke to edit her statements. He emphasised the **professionals'** role of making recommendations, rather than offering concrete decisions and resources. Katy Downes did not act in Mark's response, but the professional 'we' who would make recommendations. Mark's response can be seen as an assertion of the 'assessment' model over the more 'active' model suggested by Katy Downes' response. That the team leader felt it necessary to correct her expectation so directly and quickly presented further evidence, within the data, of the possible tension between the two models.

- *The 'assessment' model*

The 'assessment' model was neatly presented in certain descriptions, as a logical progression from assessment to recommendations.

Young people's strengths and weaknesses were the clearly articulated objects of the EV assessments, according to several descriptions. In an illustrative example, Tara explained the focus of the assessments:

... what is going to come out of these assessments is strengths and limitations. To give you a clearer picture of your strengths, and those areas you need more help with.

The assessed strengths and weaknesses were generally expected to make up the meetings' informational content.

The goal of formulating a collective impression was an overwhelmingly common pattern across professionals' descriptions. Sharon put forward this goal as a strong advantage of the meetings:

... a very systematic approach assessing the needs of somebody. You're seeing it from all different aspects, it's very comprehensive; and if one discipline [team member] has not, omitted something, likely that another discipline has picked up on it.

Collaboration, and not only co-operation, was advocated by this goal; each team member contributed a dimension to the picture and a team member was likely to be able to compensate for information absent from another team member's contribution.

What was this collective goal arguing against? Liz's account contained a possible justification for the collective goal:

I see that as a team we help to co-ordinate it, an overall impression of where the person is at the moment and where they might be going. ... I think that's valuable, because a lot of times, people are strung out along a lot of hospitals, and disciplines, they get repeated information ...

The collective goal could be seen in contrast to people (clients) having to co-ordinate for themselves information from different sources, and the inefficiency of people receiving repeated information from either different places or different disciplines.

Images of 'pictures' were used throughout many descriptions of this goal. While the 'whole picture' might have the advantage of efficiency and consolidating information, two professionals expressed some disadvantages. One outside professional explained in her account: "*And it gives us a more holistic look at the student. The disadvantage of course is that they [the EV team members] don't know them well, they don't know them as we do.*" A 'picture' might provide a 'holistic' view but the picture could be but a brief 'snapshot' at a certain moment in time. This 'snapshot' might provide some information but, as the above quote points out, it was an impression rather than a deep knowledge based on interaction over time.

Expression of the collective goal did not typically end with the formulation of the 'whole picture', but with collective presentation. Mark's account, for example, was almost completely dedicated to describing how the team 'consolidated' or 'distilled' the information from the six or seven team members and decided how to present it to the family. Professionals would provide the information; the young people and their parents would receive it. The difference in activity was highlighted by Sharon:

We meet ahead of time so the staff of the other disciplines are able to hear what we all have to say. So then we sort of say, "What are we going to tell the family?" You know, how we can present it. And then again each discipline reviews it. But the family does have time to respond, to ask questions. Ah more often than not they don't. They just sit there and take it and leave, they may feel a bit overwhelmed.

Sharon's statements constructed a contrast between the activity of the team meeting and the inactivity of the family, within the following meeting. The family was given the opportunity to (re)act within the meeting: i.e., they were given the opportunity to respond or to ask questions. In reality, said Sharon, the family rarely took on this activity. While professionals' actions were essential to the meeting, the family's actions did not appear to be so.⁴

Many participants stated the goal of making recommendations based on the assessments' findings. Ruth articulated such a goal succinctly; the meetings aimed: *"To make the recommendations based on what their findings were."*

- ***The 'active' model***

Goals included in this category lacked the definitive framework found in the 'assessment' model category. These goals were not always presented as a progression, but rather peppered throughout the descriptions in various combinations.

Making decisions was a goal rarely articulated, and only found in young people's and parents' descriptions. In one interview, Mrs Trudeau succinctly defined the meetings' purpose: *"To make a decision on Val's*

⁴Young people's and parents' listening to the reviews could be considered a type of action. In one way, this action was essential. The professionals disbanded if neither the young people nor parents attended (two of the seven meetings). The team meetings, however, did not depend on young people's and parents' presence. No full meeting with professionals, young people and parents was re-scheduled after the young people and parents unexpectedly failed to attend.

future.” Mrs Trudeau clearly stated the young person’s future as the decision’s focus. Future professional support was an expectation of numerous descriptions. Mrs Shields, for example, provided an extensive account of how difficult leaving school was for “*someone in a wheelchair*” and the desperate need to have people to help find “*something suitable*”. Sue valued the connection between professionals and the young people for the future, over the actual assessment results and recommendations:

So um, I think I think of it in terms of, you know, as something that provides the student with resource people more so than you know the recommendations that actually come back to us. (Sue was an outside professional.)

While only parents and young people articulated the goal of making decisions, only professionals mentioned practical follow-up of the meetings. Of the two professionals who did so, both expressed the goal negatively, i.e., that the goal was difficult to put into practice.

In the previous discussion of the ‘assessment’ model, I argued that the young people (and their parents) could be seen as recipients of information within the meetings, rather than as active participants. The verbs used to describe future professionals’ support—‘to help’, ‘to facilitate’, ‘to assist’—could be seen to place young people in an active role, albeit in the future. Professionals were in a **supportive** role and not in a providing role; professionals might be acting in the future, but their future actions depended on the young people’s actions at that time (see Katy Downes’ account, for example, p.103). The ‘active’ model might be aptly labelled. It potentially suggested a more active position for young people—in their futures, but not at the meetings—and promised more future action by professionals, than the ‘assessment’ model.

Table E: The ‘Assessment’ Model as Compared to the ‘Active’ Model

The ‘Assessment’ Model	The ‘Active’ Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• recommendations by professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• decisions by the group (?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• young people and parents as recipients of information, within the meetings. Possibility of young people and parents to influence assessments before the meetings? (See page 160)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• possibility of young people and parents, working with professional participants, to make decisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• information: young people’s strengths and weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• action: future professional support, especially in finding employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• emphasis on what informed the meeting (assessments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• emphasis on what was produced from the meetings (decisions/ plans)

Sources

What are the numerical patterns across descriptions and within sources?

Goals pertaining to the ‘assessment’ model can be found across all sources, with a particular concentration within professionals’ descriptions. The goal of reporting information was raised within many professionals’ descriptions (eight of fourteen). Collective presentation was raised within professionals’ descriptions (six of fourteen) and only one parent’s account. Three of these descriptions were phrased negatively, that is, questioning the value of presenting information that was not new to the parents. Slightly fewer descriptions articulated the goals of assessing strengths and weaknesses (five) and recommendations (seven). Parents’ and young people’s descriptions did contain these goals, but with less consistency.

Goals included in the ‘active’ model can also be found across all sources. The pattern across sources is reversed: parents more often articulated such goals than professionals. Five parents spoke of goals that could be included in this category. Four parents specifically raised the goal of assistance or help from the professionals. (Five parents were interviewed.) Two of fourteen professionals, in contrast, mentioned such goals.

Taken as a group, professionals’ descriptions tended to articulate goals that are placed more easily into the ‘assessment’ model than the ‘active’

model. Numerically, the descriptions most often expressed goals about reporting information, making recommendations based on this information, and collective presentations.

Numerical comparisons amongst young people's or parents' descriptions have little salience, as the numbers within each group are small. At the same time, four parents (of five) and two young people (of five) raised the goal of assistance or help in the future. Most parents' descriptions contained goals included in the 'active' model. Only one parent (and no young person) mentioned any goal that could be related to collective presentation.

Comparing the FNA and EV Meetings' Purposes

- *Approaches to the 'transitional problem'*

According to the participants' descriptions, meetings were not dedicated to addressing specified components of the young people's futures. Descriptions of the 'future' were vague. Leaving school was sometimes raised as the critical event for young people in their futures; employment and/ or further education were occasionally offered as the desired next steps. Professionals in the EV meetings were more likely to raise directly the objective of employment than FNA professionals. Parents at the FNA meetings were more likely (proportionally) to raise employment as a goal than the parents at the EV meetings. In general, however, specific components of the 'future' were rarely mentioned.

FNA participants' descriptions did contain general references to the young people's futures. A whole range of goals—from those that emphasised what young people wanted, to those that emphasised service provision—referred to what the young people would do in their futures. Making decisions about the young people's futures was often mentioned.

Certainly, FNA participants' descriptions seemed to take different approaches to the young people's futures. Some participants' goals focused on what young people wanted; other goals emphasised what service provision would be made available. These two different approaches could be considered complementary or competitive. If what young people wanted was

service provision, for example, the goals were complementary. If what young people wanted was ignored or constrained, in preference to what provision was available, then the goals might be competing.

FNA participants' descriptions differed noticeably from the statutory requirements. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended, Section 65B–(1), and the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, Part III, Section 13–(4), required provision to be considered and reports to be made. Participants rarely made reference to the legal frameworks of the meetings. When reports were mentioned, the references were negative, i.e. that the reports were not always completed.

Most EV meetings' descriptions lacked the focus on young people's futures demonstrated in the FNA meetings' descriptions. This difference might relate to a further distinction between the two meetings: making 'recommendations' was a goal of EV meetings (according to professionals' descriptions) while making 'decisions' was a goal of the FNA meetings (according to a range of participants' descriptions). The recommendations of the EV meetings might emphasise a look back to the assessments; the decisions of the FNA meetings might emphasise a look forward to the future. The EV professionals' descriptions might be stressing an 'assessment' model while the FNA descriptions might be outlining a more 'active' one.

The potential distinction between these two approaches was further supported by conflict within the descriptions. The EV meetings' descriptions themselves contained not only discourse that could be seen to refer to each model, but also actual struggle between the two models (see page 103). Colin's extensive disavowal of assessment's priority within the FNA meetings could be seen as another example of struggle, within his account, between an 'assessment' model and a more 'active' model (see page 96).

At the same time, many FNA meetings' descriptions suggested that the 'assessment' and the 'active' model need not be dichotomous. Several FNA professionals' descriptions proceeded from assessment to decisions within the descriptions. Assessment could be the preliminary stage of a model; decisions could follow. That certain descriptions set up a conflict between the two models might provide a useful insight into what actually happened within the meetings: in what ways, and to what effect, could these two different emphases be in conflict? Did participants' satisfaction appear to be affected by any such conflict?

- *Participants' roles within the meetings*

Groups of participants were referred to in particular ways, within the descriptions. Such references provided clues to various participants' roles within the meetings. In particular, FNA professionals' descriptions displayed different references to two groups of participants—the young people and themselves—than the EV professionals' descriptions.

The lexicons were likely influenced by a variety of factors: from the cultural context, to the institutional setting, to people's careers outwith the meetings. At the same time, the lexicons did hint at particular participants' perceived roles within the meetings, and what status and influence these roles might possess.

Table F: Different Lexicons Referring to 'Professionals' and 'Young People'

This Research	FNA Professionals	EV Professionals
young people	young people children	clients students adolescents individuals
professionals	• inconsistent professionals everybody involved people from various agencies	• consistent team members disciplines

FNA professionals quite sharply divided on their references to the young people. Their references to either 'young people' or 'children' were almost equally distributed amongst the descriptions: equal numbers (nine of fourteen) used 'young people' and/ or 'children'; nineteen references were made within the descriptions to 'young people' and twenty-four to 'children'⁵. This lexicon could be definitively contrasted with that used by EV

⁵I used the term 'young people' consistently throughout my interviews with professionals. Arguably, the high incidence of this term throughout FNA professional definitions might be partly attributed to the discourse I presented. EV professionals, however, did not similarly pick up my use of 'young people' in their accounts.

professionals. The term 'children' was completely absent from their descriptions. The most common choice was to describe young people as clients (nineteen times in six of fourteen descriptions). 'Students' was used in the outside professionals' descriptions. Other choices included 'adolescents' and 'individuals' (two descriptions each).

I found the contrast between the most common choices of each type of meeting—'children' or 'young people' versus 'clients'—suggestive. 'Children' and 'young people' emphasised the young people's youth. The corollary terms could be considered to be 'parents' or 'adults'—terms typically connected with more control and more status in our society than either 'children' or 'young people'. These two facets contrast with the term 'clients'. The term is associated with a market terminology that values clients because of their market power. Clients have the choice to take their business elsewhere. Professionals are dependent on their clients' business, according to these market ideas. Could the term 'clients' suggest a more powerful position for the young people in the meetings than either 'children' or 'young people'?⁶

While only EV professionals used the potentially more empowering term 'clients' in their descriptions, only EV professionals used the potentially more negative term 'adolescents'. Rather than describing their buying power, 'adolescence' describes a stage of development typically deemed difficult in our society. Adolescents are often seen as rebellious and troubled, rather than people in control and mature. (See pages 44-45.) For example, one professional used the term 'adolescent' in combination with immaturity and lack of understanding:

And because adolescents, you know, you may tell them, "Oh yeah yeah I'll do it." But when it's something really important, they're not always mature enough to really understand the point.

Describing the young people as 'adolescents' might suggest less than an adult status for the young people, and an accompanying loss of power.

Professionals used a range of terms to refer to themselves, within the FNA meetings' descriptions. The term 'professional' itself was the most common (used within six of fourteen descriptions). Other choices included 'everybody involved with' and 'people from various agencies'. Sometimes

⁶EV professionals might not have used the term 'children' because all of their 'clients' were over the age of sixteen. However, the EV professionals could have used the term 'young people' as did FNA professionals, rather than 'clients'.

various professional disciplines were listed (educational psychologist, specialist careers officer, for example). Only twice was a 'multi-disciplinary team' referred to within a description while a 'multi-disciplinary view' was used within another professional's description. The strongest pattern found within FNA professionals' descriptions was a **lack** of consistency in referring to themselves. This lack of consistency could be contrasted with the distinct lexicon found across EV professionals' descriptions. 'Team members' or 'each discipline' were the two choices; either or both of these terms were used within twelve of fourteen descriptions.

What did these differences suggest? The EV professionals were described more as a team than the FNA professionals. The EV meetings might thus be perceived as working from an interactive model of 'teamwork'. The FNA meetings might be seen as bringing together disparate professionals, each with their separate allegiances, because of a common concern. The EV meetings might be working on a collaborative model through the 'team'. The FNA meetings might be emphasising a more co-operative model between professionals.

If EV professionals referred to themselves as a 'team', where did this place the young people and their parents? Sharon, for example, spoke of the EV 'team' constructing the collective picture and presenting it to the 'family'. The young people and parents were thus placed outwith the team as recipients. (see page 105) If FNA professionals perceived themselves as disparate professionals coming together to co-operate, where might this place the young people and their parents? The young people and parents could be three more people who were 'brought together' for the meetings, with the possibility of greater inclusion.

FNA professionals did talk of bringing 'everybody' together, within their descriptions. Whom do the professionals mean to include as 'everybody'? Overt inclusion of young people and parents was rare (two possible instances were found). Some evidence suggested that they might be included in the 'everybody' who gathered and made decisions; a large amount of evidence suggested that they might be the subjects of assessments and the recipients of information, if not concrete decisions (see pages 93-96). Certainly, the process would continue with or without parents' or young people's presence or contribution. The active role of the professionals as a group, in contrast, was firmly established within the descriptions. They were definitively included as 'people from various agencies' being brought

together and making decisions about what the young people would do when they left school.

I found less ambiguity within the EV descriptions. Professionals' roles as assessors, transmitters of the findings, and the makers of recommendations were established in many descriptions. While some descriptions asserted that they were welcome (with the rest of their family) to respond within the meetings, young people were largely referred to as recipients of information rather than actors at that time. In the active model, by contrast, young people would be the primary actors in the future. When 'help' was mentioned, it was consistently phrased so that professionals would be supporting young people in their future actions. (See pages 103 and 106)

- *Could a general set of purposes be identified for each type of meeting?*

FNA professionals' focus on service delivery and provision might conflict with the young people's and parents' focus on the young people and their futures. FNA professionals' goal of smooth and efficient post-school transition might conflict with young people's goals of finding out what they could achieve. How easily could a future, defined in relation to what young people wanted for their futures, dovetail with another account emphasising available provision?

Within the EV meeting descriptions, examples of 'assessment' and 'active' goals could be found across sources. Different sources, however, emphasised one or the other of these models. If the distinction between the two models could be dissolved, then the combination of the goals could be considered a general set of purposes. If the distinction was upheld, then sources appeared to divide between each other on what set of purposes they defined. Would EV young people and parents be satisfied with meetings that provided extensive information and recommendations but failed to plan concrete action?

Could one general, if vague, purpose be pointed to for each type of meeting? Based on the typologies used here, participants' descriptions did have areas of overlap. On the other hand, professionals' descriptions appeared to differ from those of the young people and parents over certain goals. Did this lead to any conflict or dissatisfaction within the meetings?

Emerging Issues

The fieldwork and analysis both began with an interest in particular issues: how young people's post-school futures would be conceptualised; young people's involvement within the meetings; and how and what decisions/ recommendations were made. Because of this interest, finding data that referred to these issues was inevitable—the interest lay in the particulars of participants' perceptions and observed practices (considered in greater depth in following chapters). As this chapter suggests, these issues were salient for the participants and in some cases were, even at the level of describing the meetings' purposes, problematic.

Other issues emerged from this initial analytical task that were either unexpected or previously given little emphasis. These included:

- The issue lay less around **how** the young people's futures were conceptualised—for example, should employment be *a/* the goal?—than **if** young people's futures were overtly conceptualised at all.
- A possible tension between an 'assessment' and an 'active' model was noted within the EV meetings. Some EV participants thought/ hoped that meetings would result in future action, whereas others stated that the meetings could provide assessments and not action.

The FNA meetings might exemplify an 'active' model, focusing on decisions and resulting action.

- A possible tension between statutory/ bureaucratic requirements and professional practice was noted within the FNA meetings.
- The lack of follow-up from the FNA and EV meetings was criticised, as well as the lack of discussion within the FNA meetings.
- FNA meetings could be described as co-operative, bringing together disparate professionals, young people and parents to **try** and work together. EV meetings could be described as collaborative, among professionals, bringing young people and parents to the meetings to hear the results of these collaborations.

Despite both being inter-disciplinary meetings addressing young people's post-school futures, the EV and FNA meetings seemed to have different approaches. How did these differences affect young people's involvement in the meetings? How did they affect how decisions/ recommendations were made? How did they affect participants' satisfaction? The next three chapters will consider these issues.

CHAPTER SEVEN: YOUNG PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT

... I think it's something again that we need to give more attention to ... how we include young people most helpfully in the procedures which are deciding about their futures. And enabling them. And empowering them, you know, to make a meaningful contribution as well. (Jane, FNA professional)

With today's emphasis on 'empowerment' and client-professional 'partnership', young people's inclusion in their transitional meetings appears essential. Services for disabled people have been severely and repeatedly criticised for failing to include their clients within service development and decision-making processes. Transitional services have in particular been criticised by such research as Hubbard (1992) and DPCR (1991) for failing to ask and listen to young people. When young people are rhetorically being encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and to move towards 'adulthood', it is contradictory to make transitional decisions/ recommendations without their involvement. (See pages vi and 58.)

There are also more general reasons for clients' involvement in meetings with professionals. First, clients may be better able to ascertain their needs than professionals. By including clients in the problem definition process, the resulting decisions/ recommendations can be better oriented to serving 'real' needs.¹ Second, participants involved in problem definition and selection of strategies are more likely to share the responsibility for them, which will lead to more successful implementation².

The following chapter will concentrate on young people's involvement in their Future Needs Assessment (FNA) and Educational-Vocational (EV) meetings. At first, the discussion will adhere closely to what I observed and heard at the meetings. I hope in this way: to chart a map of how I analysed the data; to provide the reader with information to judge my interpretations and conclusions; and to emphasise how the accumulation of small actions and decisions could create atmospheres that included or excluded the young people. Each type of meeting will be

¹For example, see Bailey et al. 1983, p.247.

²For example, see Fenton et al. 1979, p.639; Witt et al. 1984, p.28; and Ysseldyke et al. 1982, p.308.

considered separately through three windows, which provide particular insights into young people's involvement vis a vis the meetings:

- 1) How the meetings were structured;
- 2) How participants interacted within the meetings; and
- 3) Critical events within the meetings.

The chapter will end with a broader look comparing the two types of meetings.

The Future Needs Assessment (FNA) Meetings

How the Meetings were Structured

- ***Who attended meetings***

Parents, or the person taking on the parental role, came to all but one meeting.³ Thirteen of fourteen young people attended the observed FNA meetings. One young person decided that she did not want to attend; her parents attended and voiced her views as well as their own. A basic criterion of young people's inclusion was thus insured: physical presence at their meetings by either the young people themselves or their representatives.

Every FNA professional mentioned the potentially intimidating size and composition of the meetings, as a deterrent to young people's involvement. At least seven professionals were invited to the FNA meetings (see page 27 for list). Even when some professionals were unable to attend, the young people and parents were outnumbered by professionals at every FNA meeting. While some parents expressed appreciation at the variety of professionals prepared to help their children leave school, young people only expressed intimidation at the large group of people. For example, Gillian Stone recalled her initial response when she walked into her first

³In one case (not included in this research), the meeting was postponed as the mother was not present. In another case of parental absence, the meeting continued without the parents. The decisions appeared to be based on professionals' judgement as to whether or not these parents wished to attend.

For discussion of gender implications of which parents attended the FNA meetings, see page 86.

FNA meeting: *"I looked around, and all these people were sitting around, and I was like, 'Oh mummy, help me.'"*

At FNA1 meetings, several of the professionals were unknown to the young people and parents. Some of these professionals might become more familiar to the young people and parents by the following FNA meetings, but the young people and parents might still only have met them once or twice during the intervening year.

At a young person's meeting, professionals could be present who were not assigned to work with that young person. Robertson School's scheduling was arranged so that each psychologist could participate in the meetings for the young people on her/ his caseload, and then leave. Each psychologist's caseload, however, did not necessarily match other professionals' caseloads. Other professionals, such as the specialist careers officer, sometimes found themselves dealing with alternative young people on the day's schedule. Such professionals often remained in the room while the other meetings took place. These additional professionals only added to the numbers and unfamiliar faces for the young people and parents. (For example, see Traci Miadich's case study, page 232.)

The large number of professionals, the unfamiliarity of some, and the lack of any contact with others all added to a potentially intimidating environment for young people, and hence to their hesitation to interact.

- ***Preparation for the meetings***

Young people attending their first FNA meetings knew little about how the meetings were to proceed. They had not received written invitations nor descriptions (parents only were sent invitations), and most had gained their knowledge of the meetings through the school 'grapevine'. The young people attending their first FNA meetings typically had vague ideas about what they wanted to do in the future. Young people with more precise ideas did not seem to have discussed their ideas before their meetings, with any professional participant. Parents attending their first FNA meetings expressed even more confusion than the young people. In several post-meeting questionnaires, parents reported a range of reasons for their confusion: not knowing what to expect from the meeting; and considerable confusion as to what had taken place (for example, they remained unsure what the meeting was about, whether decisions had been

made or not, professionals' identities and roles at the meeting and what were the parents' roles). Three parents declared that **next** time they would be able to contribute because they would know what to expect and what questions to ask. If young people were unable to express their own views, parents were unlikely to act as advocates, as they felt similarly confused and unprepared.

Young people and parents who had attended previous FNA meetings were obviously well aware of the meetings' format. Some young people had been involved in Robertson School's career classes, where the careers teacher had discussed their futures with the young people generally and with specific reference to the FNA meetings. One young person had canvassed teachers' opinions on his chosen next educational step. Young people who had seen the specialist careers officer within the previous week expressed definite views about school continuation, Further Education (FE) college placement and career choice. Not all young people, however, had seen their specialist careers officer so recently nor recalled what had been discussed in career classes. Such pre-FNA meeting preparation did not seem to guarantee young people's readiness for their FNA meetings.

Professionals were not typically aware of other professionals' written assessments and recommendations before they attended meetings. Even if they received a report at the meeting, they only had time to read it quickly and certainly lacked time to reflect on the content.⁴ Young people and parents were not expected recipients of professionals' reports. If the reports were distributed before the meetings, the young people and parents could be at an informational disadvantage to the other professionals. Further, neither young people nor parents were asked to contribute their own report for the FNA meeting. In both the production and distribution of reports, then, young people and parents were not involved in the 'multi-disciplinary team'.

- *Physical set-up of the meetings*

The meetings were held within a room within the school, during the school day. The meetings were therefore very accessible to the young people: they could leave class just before the scheduled time; they had but

⁴For further description of professional reports required and made, see pages 171-172.

a short distance to cover to the meeting room; and the school was physically accessible. (The site and timing of the meetings was potentially less accessible to parents.) The FNA meetings were scheduled back-to-back, with a break mid-morning and for lunch. As such, the young people and parents waited their turn out in the corridor, seated against the wall. The young people and parents were then ferried in and out of the room where the professionals awaited them.

Because the young people and parents were waiting out in the corridor while (almost all of) the professionals waited inside, some young people and parents worried that they were being discussed before they entered. If young people and parents were not immediately available for the meetings, the professionals did typically take advantage of that time to discuss the young people (and parents). I was aware that this happened in three of fourteen cases. More usually, the young people and parents were discussed after they left the meetings. Such a format excluded young people and parents—in a very practical sense—from full involvement.

One parent discussed how the meetings' physical set-up prevented Kate Lewis from interacting in her normal, vivacious way. She began:

*I felt that the minute Kate walked in today, they were all watching to see how she was going to walk in and sit on her seat. Just to see how she'd do. And that seat. I know that Mrs Ross just plopped it down, but [it] was no where **near** where Kate was going to sit. ... And she can get up and down much better than she did.*

The physical organisation of the meeting meant that Kate Lewis' impairments were highlighted and she had difficulty functioning in that environment. As a result, Mrs Lewis worried that professionals undervalued Kate Lewis' abilities and that her daughter felt uneasy. The situation clearly made Mrs Lewis uneasy, and made her feel defensive. To take a sociological point of view, the meetings' structure 'handicapped' both Kate and Mrs Lewis, according to Mrs Lewis' narrative.

The actual set-up of the room was hierarchic and formal. (For example, see Diagram G, next page). Every comment made by young people and parents about the meetings' physical organisation was critical. For example, the headteacher was seated facing the young people and parents when they entered. Three young people and parents referred to the headteacher at the 'top' of the table, and thus the person in charge; the young people and parents were invited to sit down at the 'bottom' of the

Diagram G: Example of FNA Meeting Physical Set-Up

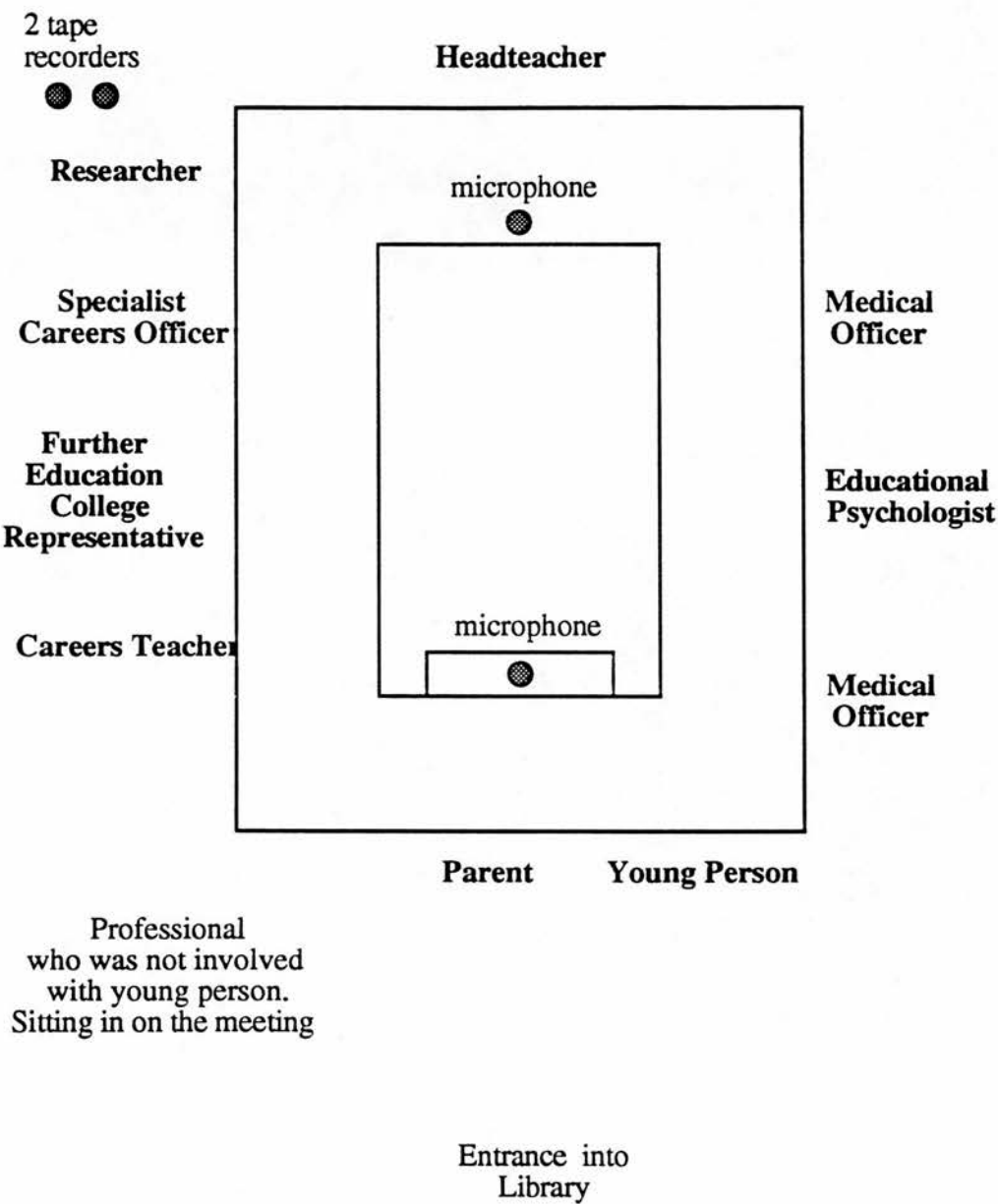


table. Five professionals considered this physical set-up particularly threatening for the young people. Eddie stated his opinion vividly: *"They're suddenly wheeled into a sort of well, in my basic training days, I remember it was described as a 'trial by horseshoe' interview."* Changing the seating structure to more comfortable chairs and a more informal set-up was specifically advocated by four professionals.

- *Time allotted to the meetings*

Robertson School was assigned one day for FNA meetings, three times a year, by the Colburne Education Department. Other schools in the Region were assigned other days. Such a co-ordinated Colburne schedule ensured that professionals would be able to attend all necessary meetings. The single day at Robertson School meant that ten or more young people legally had to be seen that day, in order to fulfil statutory and bureaucratic requirements.

The time pressures on the meetings were therefore strong. The observed FNA meetings ranged from 4.5 minutes to 22 minutes⁵, with the average meeting being nine minutes long. On one day, the headteacher took the opportunity to emphasise the pressing schedule:

Right, well if parents aren't here, that will give us an extra three minutes or something which is helpful. ... What we were going to try and do, is to rattle, indeed we'll have to rattle through fairly quickly, to finish by one fifteen or one thirty. ... If there are particular problems, I would soon suggest that we would ... set up a separate meeting with parents to discuss their particular problems, rather than hold everyone back, and then have a sort of delay cumulative through through the whole day, for that would make life awfully difficult.

The headteacher explicitly announced that the meetings were not to deal with parents' (nor young people's?) 'particular problems' but rather to 'rattle through fairly quickly' in order to meet a time schedule. The meetings appeared to have clearly set agendas that propelled the meetings. These agendas were apparently not set by the parents (nor young people), since their concerns were described as 'particular problems' that would only 'hold everyone back'.

⁵One meeting that was eventually excluded from the data for geographical reasons was over 40 minutes long. This meeting took place at the end of the day.

Professionals themselves said they felt quite rushed by such tight scheduling. Some young people and parents expressed bewilderment. One parent inquired at the end of the ten minutes assigned to her child's FNA2 meeting: *"That's it?"* Linda Johnson, who had experienced two FNA meetings before, commented: *"Nothing much ever happens. I mean, you can't decide much on your future in ten minutes, which is idiotic?"*

Mr Miadich was irate that the meeting disadvantaged Traci Miadich's ability to contribute: *"You know what I mean, she wasn't given enough time to prepare for it, she wasn't give enough time to speak her mind."* The short-timing of each meeting might have prevented certain young people and parents from becoming comfortable with the format and discussion, which in turn might have prevented them from contributing verbally.⁶

The FNA meetings' timing might thus have excluded young people (and parents) in two ways: the limited time was dedicated to meeting the professionals' agenda and not that of the young people nor parents; and the timing might have been too hurried for young people and parents to feel comfortable enough to involve themselves actively.

How the Meetings Proceeded

- *How the meetings began*

When the young people and parents were invited into the room, the headteacher usually welcomed them by name, invited them to sit down and introduced all the professionals by name and role. One parent specifically voiced her appreciation of these introductions. The introductions might have created a positive atmosphere but they did not necessarily result in remembered information. Seven young people and parents were unable to identify the roles and names of certain professionals present, in post-meeting interviews.

After the welcome, the headteacher always launched into an explanatory introduction of the meeting. The explanations differed in length, typically being longer if the meeting was a FNA1 and shorter if the meeting was either a FNA2 or a FNA3. The introductions clearly stated the

⁶A connection between clients' greater comfort and their greater verbal contribution was made by Witt et al. (1984).

meetings' purposes (although no time was allotted to questioning or negotiating them) and future follow-up (i.e., that future FNA meetings would be held).

Introductions tended to focus on the requirements and purposes of the FNA 'system' or 'process' rather than how the meetings might help the young people to meet their future goals. Take a random example from Andrew Tait's introduction:

First Future Needs meeting, the idea of it is this is the starting point of the Future Needs system, which is designed and makes as smooth as possible, the transition from school to whatever provision comes after school.

This beginning sentence focused on the 'meeting' and the 'system'. The 'smooth' processing of the system was prioritised rather than interacting with, or empowering, Andrew Tait. The meeting was not described from Andrew Tait's perspective, nor from how the meeting would meet his needs or wishes.

Were there exceptions to this pattern? The headteacher's introduction to Tom Akroyd's FNA3 meeting seemed the most inclusive of a young person's views:

... Got to that stage in Future Needs that we actually need to start making decisions for ... Tom reaches the end of his fourth year in another four months? ... So there are real choices about what you want to do at the end of this session. What is your opinion about it, what what thought have you ... [Colin looked at Tom Akroyd]

Like Andrew Tait's introduction, the FNA process was described as dictating the meeting's agenda. The introduction, however, then followed with a clear request for Tom Akroyd's opinions with respect to the decisions. Overall, the introduction presented a potential alternative to other introductions' structure, particularly in its potential to promote young people's contribution and centrality.

- ***How did young people interact within the meetings?***

(No young person was unable to communicate verbally. All young people communicated to me during our interviews, with varying degrees of loquaciousness.)

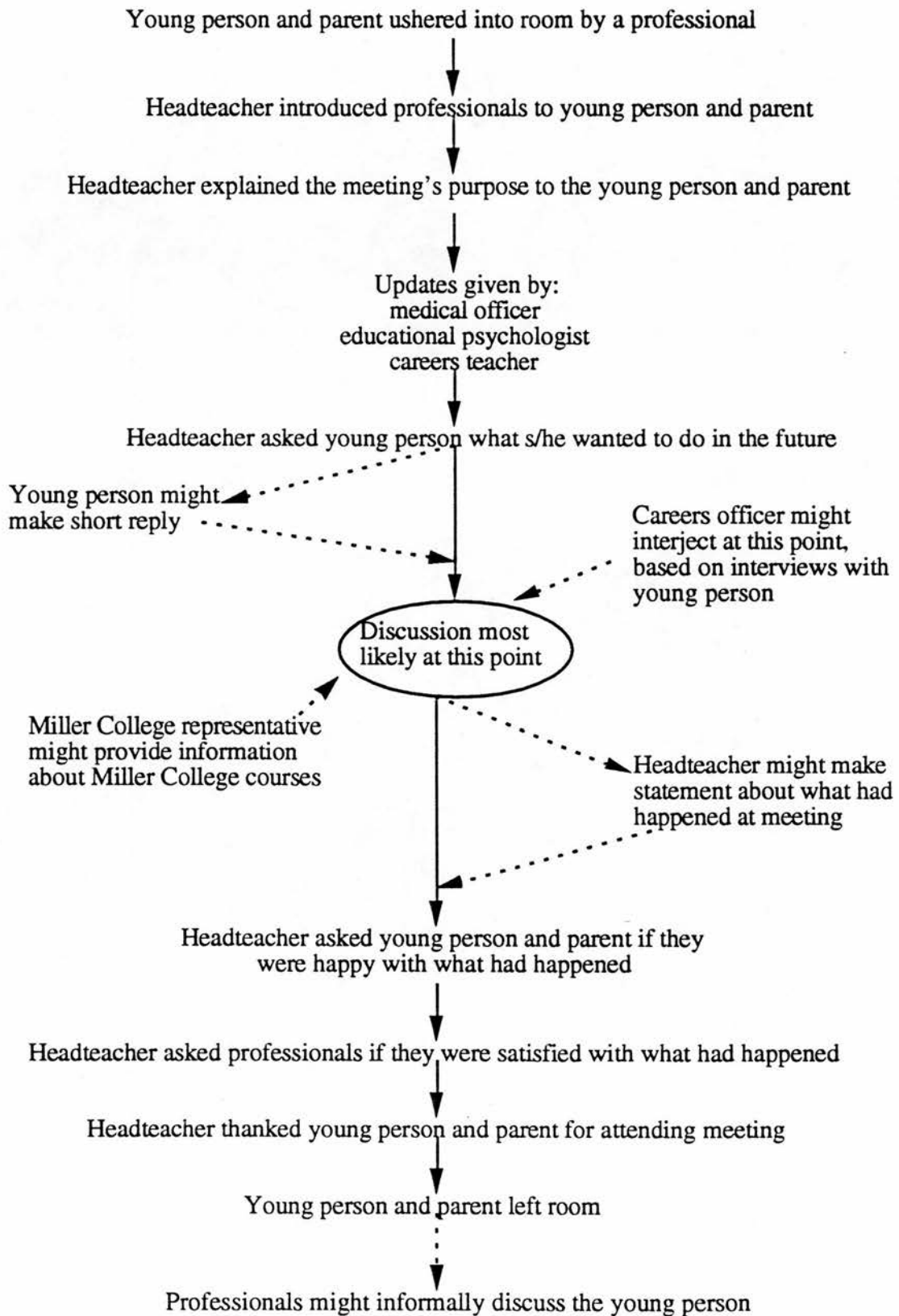
In terms of words or time spent speaking, young people made little contribution to the meetings. On average, the young people spoke eleven times⁷. While this number might be considered high in respect to the length of the meetings, young people typically spoke in short or one-word sentences. The majority of young people's contributions (75%) were answers to questions, and one third of these answers were single words (either 'yes', 'aye', or 'no'). The remaining contributions (25%) were self-initiated comments. Over half of these comments were young people defending what they wanted to do in the future, or their academic record. These young people were taking an active role by making such comments, but most reported after their meetings that they felt their views had been ignored. No young person ever asked a question within the meetings.

Seven of thirteen young people reported to me, after their meetings, that they felt their views and wishes had been heard⁸. Four of these young people qualified their answers. They said they had been **asked** for their opinions but for a variety of reasons—embarrassment, intimidating numbers of professionals, or particular events within the meetings—that they had actually said very little at their meeting. A large minority of the young people (six of thirteen) told me after their meetings that their views and wishes had not been heard.

Why did the six young people feel their views and wishes had not been heard? Only two young people criticised (both after their meetings) professionals' use of jargon. Other young people and parents did not voice any confusion over jargon even when it was used (which was predominantly in medical updates). One professional was particularly cited as displaying uninterested non-verbal behaviour by two young people. Overall, though, young people and parents did not cite the use of jargon nor professionals' non-verbal behaviour as contributing to or disadvantaging their involvement. Rather, particular events within the meetings were perceived by participants as either encouraging or discouraging young people's involvement.

⁷The one meeting where parents attended, and not the young person, was excluded from these calculations.

⁸I asked young people, "*Do you think your views and wishes were heard in the meeting?*" in their post-meeting interviews.

Diagram H: Representation of a Typical FNA Meeting's Proceedings

Critical Events

- *The relationship between assessments and young people's opinions*

After the introductions, the headteacher usually asked what ideas the young person had for her/ his future. (See Diagram H, previous page for pictorial representation of typical FNA process.)

Young people differed in voicing their opinions about their futures. I had interviewed the young people the day before the meeting, and had explored with the young people what they were hoping to do in the future. No young people suggested something in the meetings they had not discussed with me. Instead, the young people divided into two groups. One group of young people made statements very similar to the ones they had voiced to me the day before. Another group of young people said significantly less in response to the headteacher's question—usually that they did not know what they wanted to do in the future—even though they had been fairly specific and loquacious to me in the pre-meeting interviews.

Some of the potential barriers raised in previous sections could have inhibited this second group of young people from speaking. The young people had been talking only to me the day before, whereas at the meetings the young people were faced with a plethora of professionals as well as their parents. In the interviews, I could leave more time to explore issues with the young people, and there was little time pressure; in the meetings, the tight scheduling and filled agenda left little time to elicit opinions from unforthcoming young people.

Considering the meetings' interactions, though, added other possible reasons for the division between the two groups. How professionals described young people's present situations appeared to affect young people's later contributions. This relationship between the expressions of professionals' reports and young people's opinions can be best exemplified by analysing two dramatic cases. The relevant transcript sections for these two cases can be found in Appendix D.

- *GILLIAN STONE*

Consider an interpretation of how Clive described Gillian Stone's educational history. Clive's description carefully constructed a narrative

that did not blame Gillian Stone but created a sense of people working together and moving towards something more positive. While filed documents revealed that her transfer to Robertson School was fraught with emotions and tensions, Clive glossed over these difficulties in the FNA meeting. He spoke of the transfer collectively—*“we moved here”*—creating a sense that Gillian Stone was not alone, that a group had supported her move and that she was not to be deserted because of the ‘difficulties’ at the previous school. Gillian Stone was not blamed for these ‘difficulties’, by Clive, but the ‘system’.

Clive complimented Gillian Stone, identifying her as having specific positive qualities/ abilities (that is, competency, fluency, expression, thoughts and ideas). Negative comments were expressed more hesitantly—Clive asked Gillian Stone for her agreement when he raises her difficulties with maths—or distantly—*“So that’s an area.”* Clive concluded this report of Gillian Stone’s academic abilities positively (*“... she’s actually done very well, over the years”*). Colin continued to blame the system as he explained to Gillian Stone why she might not do well on her exams: *“... in a sense it’s asking you to do something that isn’t fair to to miss the first two-thirds and then do well for the last third ...”*

Louise followed Clive with an alternative description of Gillian Stone’s educational situation: *“... Life is a little bit slow, which is, you know, she’s finding it quite hard to keep up, I think.”* This comment appeared indirectly to criticise Gillian Stone for being slow. Certainly, Clive reacted quickly to Louise’s comment. Louise and Clive proceeded to have a rapid-fire discussion about Gillian Stone’s speed in writing. Listening to the tape, the interchange seemed very tense. In her final substantial comment in the dialogue, Louise interjected: *“Well, I don’t think it’s actually anything physical.”* Did this comment mean she was blaming Gillian for being unmotivated and thus slow? Clive, on the other hand, concluded that whatever the reasons, surely the system should adapt. Clive’s reaction to Louise’s comments could be perceived as a defence of Gillian Stone’s abilities, diverting blame from Gillian Stone to the system.

When the headteacher asked Gillian Stone for her ideas about the future, her answers matched those which she told me the day before. In the remaining part of the meeting, Gillian Stone continued to expand on her ideas for her future and initiated several comments on this subject.

After the meeting, Gillian felt very positive about her experience. Gillian reported that *"everyone was all ears"* to everyone else, and that: *"You know, they listened to me. Which I thought was surprising but good."* Gillian Stone's meeting was cited as positive by all professionals' questionnaire responses, and Gillian Stone's own contribution was often noted.

- **MICHAEL SMITH**

After the medical update, the headteacher Colin asked Michael Smith if he would like to talk about his own educational performance. Colin made this invitation to other young people in their meetings, but no other young person took up the offer. On other occasions, young people either refused the invitation or professionals intervened to dissuade young people from speaking (for example, see page 229).

Why did professionals not dissuade Michael Smith from speaking in this case? Why did Michael Smith decide to present his educational status? Due to various delays in starting the meeting, Michael Smith had already been involved in quite a lengthy discussion about his holiday. In this discussion, Michael Smith had mostly responded to one professional's questions. At the same time, his responses were typically quite long, and full of information he did not have to provide to answer the questions logically. This discussion could be seen as having set up a comfortable and welcoming environment in which Michael Smith felt at ease to express himself. Professionals might have perceived Michael Smith as confident and well able to speak for himself.

At Colin's invitation, Michael Smith proceeded to list and evaluate his subjects. He spoke of subjects he was *"not good at"*, but his report typically used terms of being *"good"* and of improvement. About half his comments were supported by references to grades or previous school reports. Michael Smith's update thus appeared supported by 'facts'. After a notable pause, Colin referred to Louise for *"our colleagues'"* viewpoint, thus potentially creating a distance between Michael Smith's report and the collective 'colleagues'. Louise began her response hesitantly, couching her disagreement with Michael Smith's conclusions on other people's opinions—*"most people reckon"*. She then emphasised French as a strong ability for Michael Smith. Her following comments, however, were negative.

Michael Smith appeared to be blamed for being slow. No recognition was made that perhaps the environment caused Michael Smith to have great difficulty in 'keeping up'.

Michael Smith was very upset at Louise's evaluation. As soon as I asked him for his general view of the meeting, he said:

Well. [Michael Smith sighed] See when Mrs Ross talked about the sub the, as I say the subject-thing, ... I felt a bit, embarrassed, 'cause she says Foundation level, it was a bit embarrassing for me.⁹

Four professional participants filling out questionnaires immediately after Michael Smith's meetings noted the school assessment as negative. For example, Ruth wrote: "*V. negative school report. (slow/ lateness/ keeping up)*". One of the professional participants, who was new to the FNA meetings at Robertson School, expressed great concern about how the event was handled:

Yes, just the way things were said, you know, and he was dampened down, yes, which I think is a very dangerous thing to do to a child, to a young person. You have to give him credit in a way. Because there were little bits of Michael that didn't really come up in the meeting. ... They were perhaps a little destructive. You know, the way it was put to him.

Once Louise stopped speaking, Colin moved the meeting to a new topic. While perhaps not wanting to dwell on the contrast between Michael Smith's report and Louise's more negative evaluation, Colin also closed off discussion of the report by labelling it 'background' and provided no opportunity for Michael Smith nor anybody else to comment on Louise's interpretation (a possibility as Louise did not cite any grades or specific teacher's comments as evidence, whereas Michael Smith based several of his judgements on grades and reports he had received). Further, Colin moved the meeting on by following his usual practice of asking the young person what he wanted to do. But in this case, such a request immediately followed an event highly embarrassing and distressing to Michael Smith.

At Colin's question about his wishes, Michael Smith responded that he did not know. Despite some continued questioning by Colin, Michael Smith did not provide the detailed ideas he told me in our interview.

⁹'Foundational' refers to the lowest of three levels in Scotland's examination system.

- **TWO TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS**

Comparing Gillian Stone's and Michael Smith's experiences raised two possible conclusions concerning young people's inclusion and involvement. First, the report portion of the meetings could be a turning point for young people's contributions. If a report was phrased negatively, and particularly if it blamed the young person, that young person might choose to offer little when s/he was asked about her/ his future. On the other hand, positive reports—even if they recognised difficulties, but (at least partially) blamed the system—could encourage a young person to express her/ his ideas about the future. Second, the professionals' reactions to a young person's self-evaluation affected the young person's following contributions. Young people did not tend to argue their view—whereas professionals were observed to put forward their counter view—but decided to 'shut down' and stop contributing. Overall, how professionals presented and/ or interacted over reports seemed to affect young people's involvement significantly.

- ***How did the meetings deal with young people's opinions?***

When young people stated specific opinions about their futures (seven of thirteen young people), the meetings could again be divided into two groups. In the first group (four young people), the professional participants picked up the young people's statements and elaborated on them. The young people from these meetings told me later in our post-meeting interviews that they felt involved and listened to by professionals. In the second group (three young people), the young people made statements that were greeted by silence. Typically one or two professional participants interceded, and the headteacher soon diverted the meetings to a quick summary. These three young people told me in our interviews that they felt "*shrugged off*" or irrelevant to the meetings.

Again, consider two illuminating examples within two young people's FNAs. (The transcription sections to be interpreted can be found in Appendix D.)

- **JOHN MITCHELL**

John Mitchell's FNA1 meeting proceeded through the typical welcome, introduction and medical report. Colin then requested Eddie to give his report on John Mitchell's educational history. Eddie's report was replete with positive ideas about the present (Eddie was "*glad*", John Mitchell was "*happy*" and "*doing well*"), and positive hopes for the future (John Mitchell would hopefully go on to take a "*good*" range of courses, and would hopefully achieve "*good*" results). Eddie's report could be seen to set up a comfortable and positive atmosphere surrounding John Mitchell's educational possibilities. Certainly, when Colin asked John Mitchell for any "*vague thoughts*" about his future, John Mitchell expressed himself immediately and specifically—he wished to become an accountant.

John Mitchell's views were met with silence described later by Julie as: "*There was this deathly silence, where everybody is kind of ah, 'Oh my God.'*" The written transcript can only somewhat capture the tension-filled silence after John Mitchell stated his future goals, and the hesitancy in the following turns.

Participants could be seen as (eventually) responding in different ways. First, Colin tried to avoid the tension by not directly addressing the 'reality' of John Mitchell's statement. He tested out John Mitchell's statement by repeating it. He soon tried to divert the discussion into the tangential question of whether or not John Mitchell would be working in "*open employment*" (interestingly, a question in which a positive answer was "*assumed*"). Second, Mrs Mitchell defended John Mitchell's original statement, based on John Mitchell's improvement in school. Third, Mrs Mitchell also suggested a positive alternative. Eddie picked up on Mrs Mitchell's suggested alternative and elaborated on it considerably.

These patterns of response could be seen again after Louise questioned the alternative option of graphic design. Louise spoke of being "*unrealistic*" and of options that are "*beyond what he may be capable of*". (This discourse could be seen in sharp contrast to the general positiveness of Eddie's school report, which talked instead of John Mitchell's capabilities.) Ruth this time introduced the positive alternative (i.e., John Mitchell could possibly change his "*notions*"). Both Alison and Colin changed the topic to more positive ones, avoiding a direct confrontation. Colin did not address Mrs Mitchell's last comments, when

she twice indicated her bewilderment (and distress?) about what has just occurred. Mrs Mitchell concluded with a defensive reiteration of John Mitchell's educational improvement.

John Mitchell did not participate significantly in these debates. After an initial adherence to his statement, he answered monosyllabically to Colin's tangential question. After these episodes, his only other comment within the meeting criticised himself: *"I'm useless at painting."*

John Mitchell voiced dismay over these events after the meeting, returning to the subject several times in our interview. John Mitchell criticised both the substance and the manner in which his goal was treated in the meeting. He disagreed that his goal was *"too high"* and the description of graphic design's skill requirements. He was dissatisfied because Ruth *"turned off"* the discussion about graphic design and accountancy. John Mitchell vowed to *"do my best and prove them wrong"* before the next meeting. Certainly, John Mitchell did not feel listened to within his meeting.

- **LINDA JOHNSON**

Linda Johnson, on the other hand, felt positively about how her FNA3 meeting handled her future goals.

Both Linda Johnson's educational assessment and the preceding medical report seemed to create a supportive and positive environment in which Linda Johnson could express her future goals. Colin's following question to Linda Johnson concerning her future very explicitly mapped out a future course for her, and then asked her to agree or disagree. When Linda Johnson agreed, Colin smoothly continued to outline further options. Colin made many specific suggestions before Linda Johnson articulated her own views. Her statement was thus said after considerable groundwork was laid by Colin; her comment risked little as it fitted in with this groundwork.

Linda Johnson voiced considerable satisfaction with the meeting afterwards because she *"managed to get over her point"*. Mrs Johnson was quite specific about how the meeting successfully interacted with Linda Johnson's opinions:

They should see the person and listen to the person, and that's one of the things that I did like about that meeting. Was nobody spoke, I believe, above Linda's head. They didn't speak about her as if she wasn't there.

They actually included her. ... In what they were saying. And they kept referring back to what she felt about it.

Mrs Johnson referred to several potential criteria for involvement. The professionals did not speak in jargon that Linda Johnson could not understand. They included her in what they were saying, particularly in requesting whether or not Linda Johnson agreed.

Interestingly, however, Mrs Johnson did not mention whether the professionals listened to Linda Johnson's opinion. I considered Linda Johnson's main substantive statement on what she wanted to do in the future as:

I was thinking of taking a year out, once I've got my Highers and things, and do bits and pieces to get the health side a chance to settle down. But still maybe doing something like like flexi study and part-time. I don't know.

When the discussion was actually followed after Linda Johnson's statement, I realised that the specifics of Linda Johnson's ideas post-Highers¹⁰ were not directly considered. The discussion carried on over several variations of what Linda Johnson could do, but the options of taking time off for her health, flexi study or part-time study were not discussed. Rather, other participants suggested attending a mainstream high school either for Highers or an extra year, and/ or taking college courses. While arguably part-time or flexi study could be part of these options, these specifics were not raised and no reference was made back to these options suggested by Linda Johnson. Linda Johnson's initial **agreement** to Colin appeared more listened to than her later, more specific, comments.

- **TWO TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS**

If young people were perceived to have realistic opinions by professional participants, then the meetings appeared to run smoothly and all participants expressed satisfaction with the meetings. If young people were perceived to have unrealistic opinions by professional participants, the smooth procedure of the meetings seemed to break down. Professional participants together did not seem to handle these situations well, even

¹⁰Highers are advanced level Scottish examinations that are university-entrance qualifications.

though they surely must confront such 'unrealistic' opinions regularly in FNA meetings. Professional participants voiced considerable awareness that the meetings often failed to deal successfully with young people's opinions about their futures.

In part, professionals' struggle might result from their different opinions on how to handle young people's 'realism', and where they thought the solution to such awkward situations lay. Sarah's statements exemplified one stance towards young people's 'realism'. She felt the meetings should improve in their response to young people:

I think Robertson School could do with a bit of training in positive you know, positive feedback. [Sarah laughed] Because sometimes it doesn't seem kind of. You know, it's not done in a critical tone at all, I don't think it's done that way. But sometimes it does come over in kind of a sort of fairly critical rather than encouraging.

Sarah was quite careful not to blame the meetings' personnel, but she clearly indicated that the professional participants needed to improve their handling of young people's 'unrealistic' comments. Sarah suggested further training for the professionals as the solution. Louise's statements typified the other stance. She explained her criticism in John Mitchell's meeting as a reaction to other professionals' support of his aim to work in graphic design:

I think sometimes people just make these statements you see and then the parents and the youngsters take that away as gospel, that's it, that it decided, that's what it's going to be.

Louise was concerned that the meeting would raise false expectations, and she considers it irresponsible to do so. Louise suggested that young people should be better prepared for the meeting.

Certainly, Linda Johnson was more prepared than John Mitchell about the FNA process and what to expect from the meetings. Linda Johnson was attending her third FNA. She had met several professionals within the last two years specifically to discuss her future goals, and all the meetings' participants were familiar with at least what her opinions had been at the last meeting. Thus Colin could give a substantive review of Linda Johnson's future goals to which she only had to agree. John Mitchell, on the other hand, was attending his first FNA meeting. Not only was John Mitchell unprepared for the meeting, but the professional

participants were apparently unprepared for John Mitchell's contribution. No professional participant had talked with John Mitchell before the meeting about his future goals. By the very nature of the FNA progression, young people in their later FNA meetings would be familiar with the format, and both they and the professional participants would be better prepared for the young people's opinions.

The Educational-Vocational (EV) Meetings

How the Meetings were Structured

- *Who attended the meetings?*

Young people (and parents) were contacted by the team organiser, Tara, to organise a meeting time. Tara knew that certain times were particularly suitable for the team members, and these were first suggested to the young people (and parents). The final meetings were thus partially organised around the young people's (and parents') convenience. A five day, eight-thirty to five schedule was adhered to, however, which could be difficult for parents who also had such an employment schedule.

Out of the seven meetings within this data set, neither young people (nor their parents) attended two meetings. Their absences were unexpected and caused great consternation to the EV team members and other professionals present. The team meetings (attended by professionals only) had already been held by the time it became apparent that the young people were not going to arrive. At that point the professionals disbanded. Physical presence of the young people (or parents) was clearly considered essential for the full meetings to take place.

During the year of fieldwork, a new psychologist took over the position on the team. Other team members were due to be rotated off the team. Three professionals stated that the turnover of EV team members confused the young people: someone whom the young people had never met would be presenting a (confidential?) report. The three professionals felt that the young people would then be even less likely to participate in the meetings.

Outside professionals attended certain meetings: school personnel attended five meetings, and an Easter Seal Society (ESS) Nurse attended

one meeting. The meetings thus ranged from having four to ten professionals. All professional participants were concerned that the number of professionals attending the meetings discouraged young people (and parents) from verbally participating. Rachel, for example, stated that the young people might well feel intimidated by such a large group. On the other hand, Mark outlined the advantages of having all the relevant team members present. The full meeting provided the family with a "hearing" and a "chance to talk with everybody".

Despite most professionals' considerable concerns about the numbers at the meetings, no young person nor parent mentioned any intimidation due to numbers at the meetings. Young people and parents might have been disinclined to reveal such feelings in interviews with Mark. Yet I also talked to two sets of young people and parents, in post-meeting interviews: neither young people nor parents themselves brought up such concerns. I then specifically asked young people and parents about their reaction to the large number of professionals. All respondents voiced appreciation for the range of professionals present. For example, Mrs Shields explained to me:

... if we just hear from Dr Sands, maybe there was somethings that they might have seen or or might pick up on when they're with Tom, whereas if they just tell the stuff to Dr Sands and he just makes notes and tells us like he could miss something. ... So I think I think it's it's better if you meet with everybody.

Tom Shields, who was sitting at the table during this interview, emphatically nodded his head in agreement with his mother. Even Mrs Nimes, who characterised the meeting as a "waste of time", disagreed that the number of people present was a problem. Despite my invitation to parents and young people to criticise the number of participants, none took up the opportunity. According to at least the four people interviewed (three of whom were satisfied by their meetings, and one parent who was not), the number of participants was perceived as an advantage rather than a disadvantage of the meetings, and they made no mention of an intimidating number.¹¹

Were young people (and parents) more comfortable with the **number** of professionals because they were more **familiar** with these

¹¹See discussion on page 81 concerning my elicitation of criticism.

professionals? The young people had close contact with the outside professionals, and they had met most of the EV team members before in the intensive assessment week. Yet, some of the EV team members at the meetings were not the same ones who had done the original assessments (either because somebody else had administered the tests or because of a change in the EV team personnel). Young people were slightly more likely to remember EV team members' names and roles than parents. Still, young people frequently did not remember particular team members' names and/ or roles. Greater familiarity with the EV team members did not appear to explain completely young people's lack of intimidation by the number of professionals.

- *Preparation for the meetings*

The initial 'team' meeting could be seen as professionals' preparation for the following 'full' meeting with young people and parents. As Mark described, the team meetings allowed differences in reports/ recommendations to be resolved and decisions to be made about how to communicate material sensitively to young people and parents.

Several EV team members were quick to emphasise that the material presented at the team meeting was the same as that presented to the young people and parents. The wording might differ—for example, the psychologist might use the short-form of 'grades' or IQ ratings with the team members, and use more functional explanations for the young people—but the information did not. No one mentioned that the exclusion of young people/ parents to these initial team meetings might have intimidated them. Even when four young people and parents were specifically asked, they did not express any sense of exclusion due to the team meetings.¹²

One possible exception could be found in the EV meetings. Lara Nimes and Mrs Nimes were on time for their meeting, but the team meeting was running late:

Ellen *Although if, I mean, they're talking about [Knock on door. Door opened and Lara Nimes, Mrs Nimes and receptionist in doorway] cutting that summer program.*

¹²See discussion on page 81 concerning my elicitation of criticism.

Receptionist *Your company has arrived?* [Lara Nimes and Mrs Nimes entered room]
 Kim *Um.*
 Mark *Tell them to just wait outside please?*
 Mrs Nimes *Oh, oh OK.* [Lara Nimes and Mrs Nimes were ushered out of room by receptionist]
 Kim *I'll just run out a couple of chairs.* [Kim stood up and moved two chairs out of the room]
 Mrs Nimes *You want me to leave for a minute.*
 Kim *We need a minute.*
 Receptionist *O. K sure.* [Burbles of conversation. Door closed]
 Liz [Liz laughed] *Moving faster now.* [Kim laughed]

In part, the situation was caused by the receptionist being unaware of the division between the two meetings, and thus ushering the young person and parent into the professional-only meeting. Kim did move to make Lara Nimes and Mrs Nimes comfortable outside, and Liz did verbalise that the meeting would need to move faster. At the same time, neither the young person nor the parent was greeted, the initial response by Mark was unwelcoming, nor was any recognition given at this time that Lara Nimes and Mrs Nimes were actually prompt and the meeting was late.

As an observer, I felt extremely awkward at this event and felt it created an atmosphere excluding Lara Nimes (and Mrs Nimes). Certainly, Lara Nimes and Mrs Nimes participated little in the following conference. Neither questioned nor voiced their disagreement with one of the recommendations with which they both told me later they specifically disagreed. No participant, however, mentioned the event in their post-meeting questionnaires. What effect if any the event had on Lara Nimes' or Mrs Nimes' involvement can only be speculative. Other factors could well have led to Lara Nimes' and Mrs Nimes' lack of contributions.

In one way, young people (and parents) were prepared for the EV meetings by the previous intensive assessment week. They would have met and discussed their opinions with the EV team members; certain EV team members had already explained to the young people what their recommendations would be at the EV meetings. Some young people did have clear memories of what happened or was said during the assessment weeks, but three young people in the meetings made comments indicating that they remembered neither what they had done nor what had been said to them.

Interestingly, when the team leader carried out the pre-meeting interviews with the young people, the team leader often explained to the young people what would happen in the following meetings (for example, see page 103). In this way, young people were prepared immediately before the meetings, on the meetings' purpose and process.

- *Physical set-up of the meeting*

The EV meetings were held in the Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre (SRC), which was designed for disability access. Both young people and parents had to travel to the SRC for the meetings. The two parents I spoke to after the meetings found this arrangement extremely inconvenient: arranging transport was difficult for one family, and both parents found the location inconvenient in terms of the large amount of time they had to take off work. Young people and parents were, however, familiar with the SRC generally due to the previous assessment week and other visits to the complex.

The observed EV meetings were typically held in large rooms at the end of a winding hall way, in the SRC. In these rooms, the tables were usually set up in a 'T'-formation (See Diagram I, next page).

The young people (and parents) often sat at the head of the 'T', giving them the greatest opportunity to see the other team members. Team members sometimes peered around their neighbours to make eye contact with the young people (and parents). While I thought the set-up difficult for communication, no one criticised this table set-up in post-meeting questionnaires.

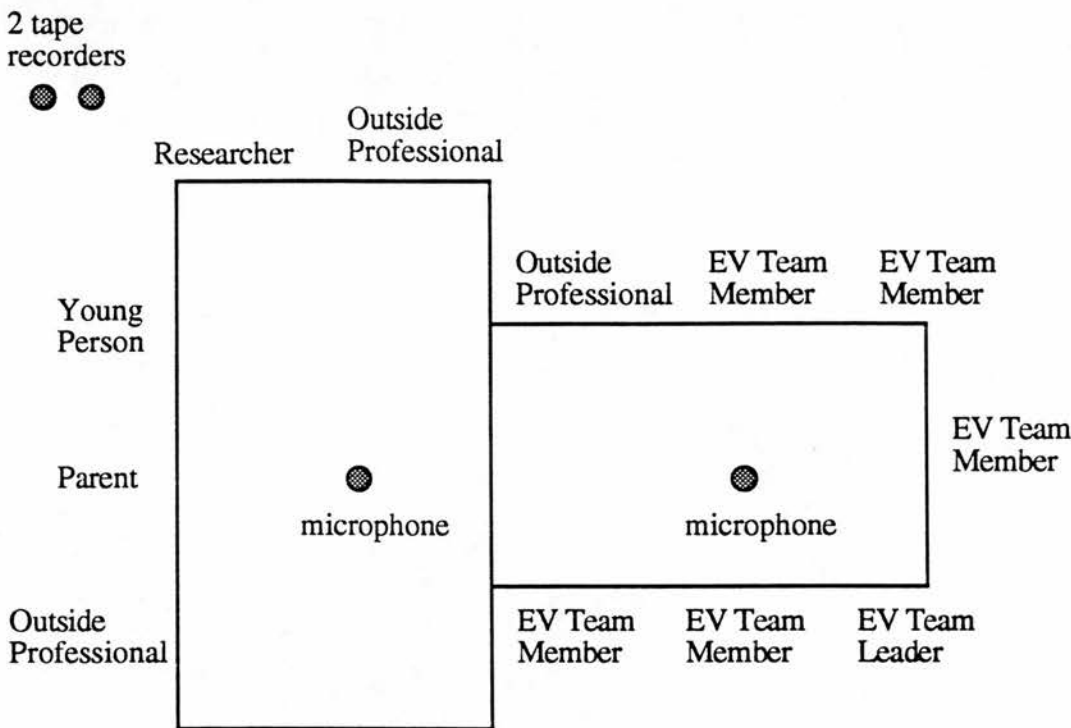
One meeting was held in a much smaller room, within a team member's department. Instead of tables, chairs were placed in a wide circle around the small room. Again, no comments are made by team members about the (dis)comfort of this set-up. No noticeable differences were apparent in the meetings' interactions, between the two set-ups.

- *Time allotted to the meetings*

Officially, the EV meetings were held from two to four weeks after the initial assessment week. This schedule was not always held to, for a variety of reasons. Young people and parents might not be able to make scheduled times (in the case of sudden illness, for example) or the EV team.

Diagram I: Example of EV Meeting Physical Set-Up

Entrance to Room



members might find it difficult to find a time when they could meet the young people and/ or parents. Whatever the reason, meetings were sometimes held months after the young people's assessments. Such delays occurred in three of the observed meetings. Both staff and young people had difficulty remembering the assessments, and thus had difficulty connecting the results and recommendations to what happened in the assessments.

The team meetings were, on average, about thirty minutes long. The full meeting with the young people and parents tended to be longer, being an average of about forty-five minutes. While the outside professionals indicated that attending both meetings was time-consuming, other complaints were not voiced. One young person stated that she had initially worried about the length of conference (particularly as she felt she would be "*under the microscope*"), but she found that actually the time had gone quickly. The time span of the meeting would presumably only enhance young people's comfort to contribute rather than detract from it. (See footnote reference page 122)

How the Full Meetings Proceeded¹³

- ***How the meetings began***

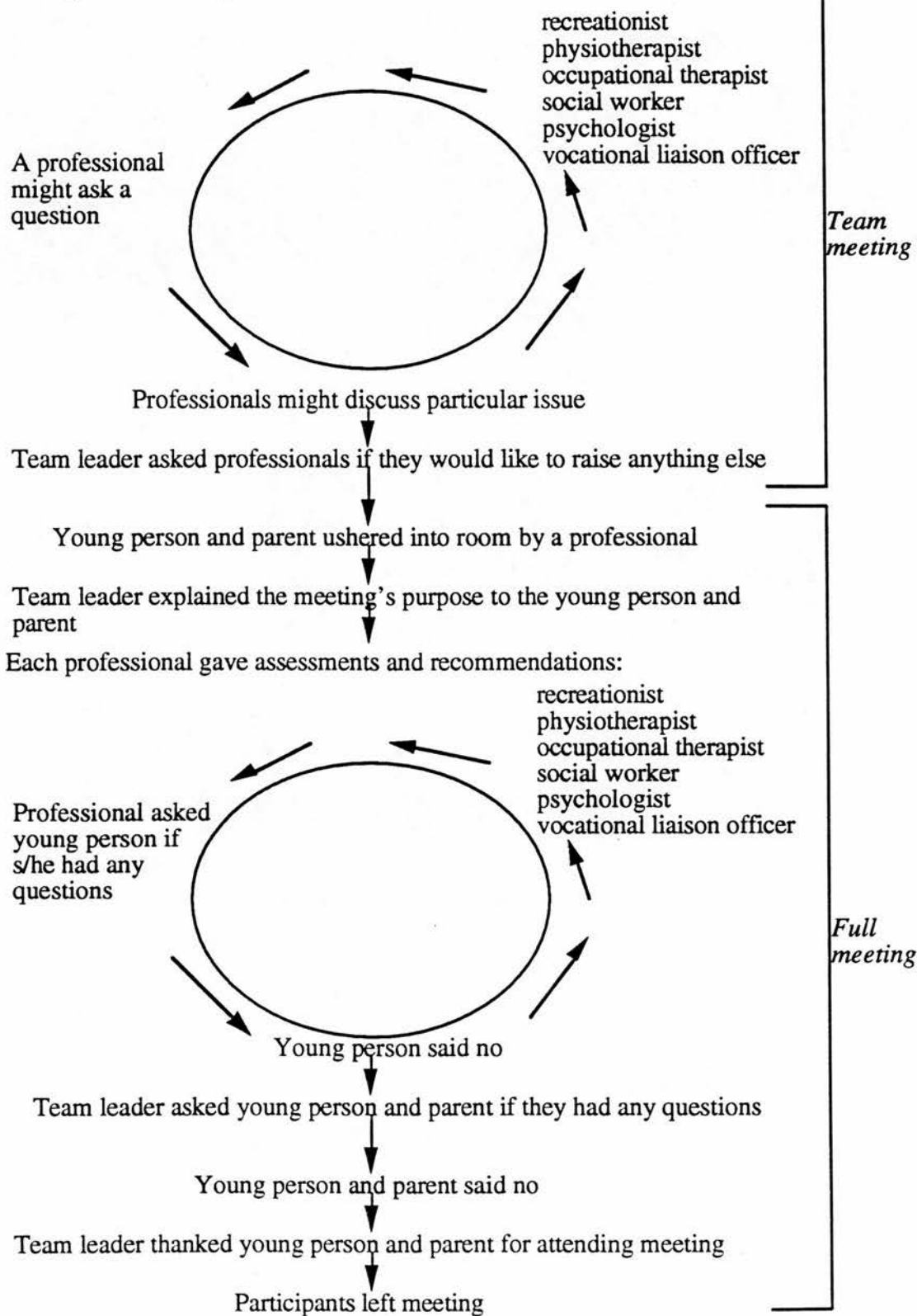
Young people and parents were usually brought to the room by one of the team members, after waiting out in the lobby chairs. When the young people and parents were ushered in, a chorus of hellos usually greeted them from the professionals already sitting in the room. The young people typically responded with their own hellos. Rarely were the professionals, young people, or parents introduced. The team leader, Mark, gave an introduction to the meetings.

The introductions differed in length and in substance. Four meetings were introduced with a statement of the meetings' purpose. Time limitations were not mentioned (after all, the time set aside for the meetings was relatively flexible). In two meetings, Mark mentioned that he would be

¹³Since young people were not invited to attend the team meetings, the proceedings of the team meetings' are not discussed from the perspective of the young people's involvement (for discussion of young people's involvement in team meetings, see pages 160-161).

Diagram J: Representation of a Typical EV Meeting's Proceedings

Each professional reported assessments and recommendations:



taking notes; in the other meetings, his note-taking was not raised. Two forms of follow-up were both mentioned in two meetings: a written report (a result of Mark's note-taking) and an appointment with Mark and Tara in four months, to go over the recommendations. In one case, these follow-up items were mentioned at the end of the meeting; in a second case, these items were mentioned in a post-meeting interview between Mark and the young person. Overall, neither note-taking nor follow-up was consistently mentioned in the introductions.

No meeting participant was directly encouraged to participate in a meeting, within the introduction. On the other hand, Mark used several techniques that had the potential to create an inclusive atmosphere with the young people. The introduction to David Bassot's meeting represented an introduction of average length, and exemplified some of these techniques:

In the last half hour or so, David we've been, people who have chatted with you before, and did the assessment with, had a discussion about what we thought we'd be feeding back to you. Each individual person that you saw will chat with you and give you some feed-back, and, with some suggested recommendations. As I mentioned to you earlier, ah, notes are taken from this and you'll receive a copy of, plus the recommendations, and then we see you four months down the road, just to see where things are at. For follow-up. O.K..? [David Bassot murmured his agreement.]

First, Mark referred to David Bassot by name early on in his introduction, clearly indicating that he was talking to David Bassot. The pronouns and verb constructions maintained David Bassot as the recipient, throughout the introduction. Second, attempts were made to resurrect past connections between the professionals and David Bassot ("*people who have chatted with you before, and did the assessment with*"). Third, casual phrasing was used at points where more formal and/ or professional terms could have been used. Forms of the verb 'to chat' were used twice: once to describe interviews and the other time to describe professionals' reporting. The follow-up was described as "*four months down the road, just to see where things are at*" rather than insisting, for example, that a 'formal review of the recommendations will be scheduled four months hence'. The casualness described past, present and future interactions informally, and thus could have lessened the intimidating aspects of the previous assessment, present meeting and future follow-up for David Bassot.

- *How did young people interact within the meetings?*

(As in the FNA meetings, no EV young person was unable to communicate verbally. All young people communicated to me during our interviews, with varying degrees of loquaciousness.)

In terms of number and length of verbal contributions, young people said little within the EV meetings. On average, young people spoke thirteen times: their contributions ranged from 'yeah' or 'no' answers to two sentence statements. One young person contributed as little as five times; one young person spoke 24 times. All other young people, however, clustered around ten to thirteen verbal contributions with the median of thirteen.¹⁴ Considering that the meetings were at least 30 minutes long, young people contributed little verbally.

Over half of the contributions (58.5%) were answers to questions, and two-thirds of these answers were brief (either 'yeah' or 'no'). One person asked two questions; the other twenty-five contributions were comments initiated by the young people. Most young people made about the same number of self-initiated comments and responses. Tom Shields was the exception. He responded ten times to questions (which included four responses to people's welcomes) and made no self-initiated comments. The self-initiated comments typically were unelicited support for EV team members' recommendations (for exception see page 208). Self-initiated comments might have displayed young people's comfort and active involvement within the meetings. Such contributions, however, were not frequent considering their distribution over five meetings, averaging 45 minutes each.

Certain team members tended to use a considerable amount of (what I perceived as) jargon but the phrases were almost always explained by the person using them. On one occasion, one team member was required to present another team members' report. The team member expressed considerable hesitation while attempting to do so, saying she had trouble both pronouncing the words and knowing what they meant. (Presumably this report would eventually have been sent to young people—would they

¹⁴ This calculation was based on the meetings that young people attended.

have understood it sufficiently to use it?)¹⁵ On two occasions, one young person asked for an explanation of terms she did not know. No other young person did so within the meetings. Only one participant—a parent—criticised the use of jargon within a particular meeting.

Several professionals stressed the importance of relating their verbal reports to young people's experiences within the assessments. When listening to the meetings, many professionals did try to make this relation. Consider, for example, the beginning of Joan's report:

Hi Tom. You remember we talked about recreational activities, what you did in your spare time? You had lots to say, because you do a lot of things. So that's really good. It was very, you were a very pleasant person to talk with, it was, I really enjoyed the sessions that I had with you. Ah, some of the things that we did talk about was the balance between three aspects of the recreational program: the physical, the social and the individual activities. When I asked you all the questions that I asked you? you basically identified sports or activities that you did in all those categories, which was really good. ... We did do a leisure interest inventory, and according to that, you stated that you were interested in getting additional information in certain areas.

Joan based her report on this past talk, and ultimately on what Tom Shields had told her. In addition, Joan repeated some of the patterns seen in Mark's introductions. Joan directed her report to Tom Shields, clearly setting him up as the recipient of the information. Early in her report, Joan mentioned how much she 'enjoyed' the assessment sessions. Such a comment framed the past assessment in an informal, reciprocal way rather than a formal hierarchical one. Almost all team members' reports contained such patterns. Arguably, these techniques created an inclusive atmosphere for the young people.

Three professionals raised the necessity of expressing assessment tests or labels sensitively. For example, the use of grade levels to describe reading would be avoided by the psychologist, in preference of functional descriptions of what the young people could read. One outside

¹⁵Unexplained jargon did appear in several written team member reports. For example, formal test names were used with no accompanying description; complex phrases such as "*bilateral finger flexion contractures at the PIP joints*" were included. Such names and phrases were not used in the meetings.

professional noted that the SRC team members did manage a balance between stating 'realities' and avoiding stigmatising 'labels'.¹⁶

Participants' behaviour tended to display interest in the proceedings and the young people, and participants rarely used behaviour that I perceived as disruptive or exclusive of the young people. In fact, two young people stressed the positive atmosphere of the meetings, which added to their comfort. Lara Nimes, for example, reported, "*People making me smile,*" as a positive aspect of her meeting.

A possibly distancing behaviour could have been some team members' reading of assessment reports. Both the formality of the sentence construction and the tone could have created a barrier between the reporter and the recipient, and lessened comprehensibility. Two professionals noted that the mode of presentation was known to be the very mode that the young people tended not to understand. All the young people were assessed by the psychologist as having difficulty understanding verbal communication. Many of the young people had trouble generalising from specific events. Yet the assessments were presented verbally. Many of the assessments described particular tests, which were used to infer general abilities. Neither the verbal mode of presentation nor the generalisation from specific tests was advantageous for young people's comprehension, and thus presumably their ability to question or otherwise contribute.

One professional recognised that young people were likely to be nervous since the meeting was organised around reporting of assessment results:

And anybody who's assessed is potentially nervous ... You know, you're nervous about what somebody's going to say. ... Is somebody going to tell you that you're stupid, or you're crazy or you're, you know?

Another professional remembered sensitive material being presented to the whole group, at a meeting not within this research. In this research, such discussion was not found when the young people and parents were present. Sometimes, though, the issue was flagged or explained in the

¹⁶Grade levels, however, were found in three psychology written reports. The label of "*mild mental retardation*" was also used in one report. While these labels were avoided as 'insensitive' in the meetings, no similar attention was paid in these written reports.

preceding team meetings. If young people were concerned that such material has been shared or they anticipated it would be announced at the meetings, the concern or anticipation could have heightened their unease and lessened their contributions. Two young people did indicate they were nervous in pre-meeting interviews; they both made the average number of contributions to the conference, but fewer self-initiated comments.

Three professionals noted the impossibility of anyone remembering the amount of information presented. For example, Noelle said: "... *I do have concerns that they're blanking out because it's too much, they're just, 'I don't need to endure it all?'*" Young people could have felt overwhelmed by the amount of material. The young people would then have had to search through the considerable volume of material to decide what they would like to question. Young people certainly did not remember most of the recommendations (see page 167).

While three professionals recognised that young people did not ask questions within the meeting, they stressed that young people were encouraged to telephone professionals at any time about their assessments and/ or recommendations. Thus, if young people were intimidated by the meetings, their opportunity to question or comment on the assessments/ recommendations was not lost.

In general, EV team members voiced awareness that the meetings might not promote young people's involvement but then pointed out ways by which they tried to compensate. Tara explained that the alternative—not to have a meeting—was even more unsuitable:

... There's no, there's no, it would be absolutely ridiculous for anybody to go through an assessment and not have a conference report time so that people have a chance to talk about the assessments and what have been the recommendations. You cannot just send information to people and just say, well this is the result of the assessment and that's it.

Critical Events

The EV meetings had few dramatic events that appeared to enhance or dissuade young people's contributions. Young people were not asked for their independent opinions, but to respond to the reports and recommendations presented. The questions asked to the young people tended to be close-ended, so that young people could easily answer yes or

no. Young people would have had to seize the opportunity to produce a substantive answer; the interaction did not in any way require it, and typically continued easily from one team members' report to the next.

- *Criticism of the young people*

The lack of critical events could have resulted from good practice. When criticism did seem to 'slip' out, the EV team members appeared to try and divert criticism away from the young people. Take the example of Lara Nimes' interaction with Mark, at the beginning of her meeting. (See Appendix D.)

As in the introduction to David Bassot's meeting (page 143), Mark tried three techniques that could have created a comfortable atmosphere that drew Lara Nimes into the group. He directed the introduction to Lara Nimes, by referencing her name at the beginning and continuing to phrase his questions and statements towards her. He used informal and diminutive phrasing, where formal or professional terms could have been used. (For example, 'assessments' were explained as "*coming in here to chat with them and doing some funny things*").

Mark, however, was unable to make a connection with Lara Nimes, based on her past relationships with the professionals. At the end of a (tense?) interchange as various participants tried to elicit a 'yes' response from Lara Nimes, Mark appeared to try and alter the atmosphere and divert any (possible) criticism of Lara Nimes. First, he made a comment greeted by considerable laughter ("*They told you things you **don't** want to do!*"). This comment emphasised Lara Nimes' wants over any possible lack of memory. Then Mark aligned himself and the other professionals with Lara Nimes: they all had potential memory problems ("*We all have memory problems on occasion. And yours is probably better than mine.*") Any criticism was thus deflected from Lara Nimes. Arguably, the means of deflection could also be a way to include/ connect Lara Nimes to the other meeting participants, albeit by a different route.

The reporting of assessments was a potentially critical event, as young people could feel 'dampened' by the negative results. The EV team members' reports tended to be carefully worded and framed to present a positive picture to the young people. This approach could be traced

through the sometimes (slightly) less positive picture reported in the team meetings.

For example, Mark read from the psychological report in Katy Downes' team meeting:

'May require more time to understand complex instructions and underlying principles.' Her receptive vocabulary is about 42nd percentile, and general information was low, at the 1st percentile. Spelling was at the 30th percentile. And reading recognition was at the 25th percentile, and reading comprehension at the 73rd percentile. ...

In the meeting with Katy Downes, Mark no longer used percentiles. The numbers were combined so that the positive statement of an 'average range' was reported. He emphasised what Katy Downes had been more successful in doing rather than areas in which she has been less successful. Particularly, Mark made no reference to how low Katy Downes' rating was in general information:

... Your general information about the world and how things are going on, outside of Sheldon, probably could be improved a little bit. I don't know how often you watch the news, or read the newspapers. [Katy Downes laughed and then Mark laughed] That sort of thing. And I think that will also play a part in the, ah, potentially this, I'm jumping ahead of myself a little bit, but ah, coming up this fall, looking at co-op and so on for jobs and experience, just to have a little bit more information about what's going on around yourself. ...

Mark related her lack of knowledge to the particular activities of watching the news or reading newspapers. He then made a functional suggestion that this might be an area of improvement through job experience. Overall, Mark emphasised the positive results of the testing over the negative ones; he avoided using discouraging percentiles; and he related the results to functional activities rather than abstract tests. Compared with the original presentation in the team meeting, Mark's report to Katy Downes can only be considered more positively phrased.

Most EV team members differed in how they presented material, between the team and full meetings. In the team meeting, they appeared to present the material as it was written in the report. Positive and negative material was presented at various points. To the young people, however, the positive remarks were almost always emphasised at the beginning of the report and 'areas of improvement' woven into the middle of the report. The reports typically ended with positive summaries or suggested areas of

practical application. Overall, EV team members seemed to take the most positive slant on the assessment results when presenting them to the young people. While the young people might have been nervous at hearing assessment reports, the actual presentation of the reports emphasised the positive and functional aspects of the results, rather than negative numbers based against norms.¹⁷

- *Asking for young people's opinions*

Young people were frequently asked if they have any questions within the meetings: during and after each EV team member presented a report, and the team leader asked at the end of every meeting. By the questions' structure, young people were not required to make an elaborate response, and none chose to do so. The interchange at the end of Katy Downes' meeting exemplified this pattern:

- Mark *Do you have any questions about that?* [Mark paused, looking at Katy Downes] *No.* [Mark paused] *Not now. Half an hour from now when we're all not here.* [Laughter.] *"You should have done that."*
- Katy Downes *No, not like that.*
- Mrs Downes *That's an hour later!* [Laughter]
- Mark *O.K.. Any questions, for Kim, Karen, Sharon, myself for the moment?* [Mark paused] *O.K.*

Mark gave Katy Downes numerous opportunities to comment on the meetings. He tried in different ways: by a general question directed at her, by indicating an openness to responses by lightening the conversation, and by a more specific question naming possible people for Katy Downes to question. Katy Downes did not voice her opinion nor ask any questions.

One meeting did not end with this typical pattern. In this case, Mark resurrected one recommendation and asked David Bassot to respond directly to it:

¹⁷Such a pattern was not consistently followed in written team members' reports. For example, very low percentiles were reported for two young people. Positive abilities were not emphasised to the same extent in some written reports, and what I perceived as very negative interpretations of assessment results were written.

- Mark *Getting back to Dr Dobash's [Rachel's] suggestion of getting some follow-up, in, with somebody in Sheldon to chat about your feelings and emotions and so on, do you see that as something you'd be comfortable with? Or how serious do you want to take that? Or, she's making the recommendation because she thinks it's important. On the other hand, she has to decide whether you'd be willing to follow-up on it.*
- David Bassot *Hmm, not much. I don't really talk about my feelings and stuff like that. Getting too personal.*
- Mark *If it had an effect, though, on some of the skills and some of the things that you're doing, would that make a difference? One of the questions, as Dr Dobash mentioned to you, in doing some of the assessments, she wasn't sure whether some of the **attention** issues that were showing up, might be because you are concerned about something else, and then it's hard to really focus on either this test or this job, or whatever else because you're thinking of something else. But any ways, trying to get those feelings out, and taking that weight off your shoulders. It may make it easier to go ahead and do any particular job you do I think that's where you're coming from.*
- Rachel *Hmm hmm.=*
- Mark *It's a fair.=*
- Rachel *Hmm hmm.=*
- Mark *summage. ()*
- Rachel *Does that fit with you, or.*
- David Bassot *Yeah. Sounds alright.*

Mark first asked David Bassot several questions at once, which required David Bassot to give a more extensive response than 'yes' or 'no'. David Bassot did provide one of the lengthiest responses that any young person made in the meetings. David Bassot's original opinion was clearly stated: he did not want to take up the recommendation. Yet, after Mark's lengthy narrative, David Bassot stated his agreement.

What was David Bassot agreeing to? He could have been agreeing that Mark's narrative was a "*fair summage*" and not agreeing to a psychological referral. A clarification of David Bassot's response was not requested by participants. His response was taken as an assent to the referral, and the end of the meeting was dedicated to putting the referral process into place. If David Bassot was agreeing to the psychological referral, what choice did David Bassot have to repeat his negative opinion? Mark presented a lengthy argument to persuade David Bassot. Beyond this extensive reasoning, Mark's narrative also had the force of being voiced by a 'professional' and the team leader. David Bassot could have been intimidated into agreeing to the referral. Whatever the value of David

Bassot seeing a psychologist (and it could be considerable), when David Bassot voiced the 'wrong' opinion the professionals did try and change his mind. His opinion was not automatically accepted, but open to question.

Since David Bassot was interviewed after the meeting by Mark, I was unable to explore David Bassot's response to this event. David Bassot did reply positively to Mark's question:

Mark ... *Did you think you had the opportunity to express your own views and and wishes during this interview?*
David Bassot *Yes, I could talk.*

At the same time, David Bassot stated his ability to talk rather than the actuality; his reply refers to this ability, rather than stating that his views and wishes were **heard**. While David Bassot's answer should not be over-interpreted, it suggested some possibility that David Bassot did not see himself as having fully asserted his opinions or that his opinions were not accepted.

What if more young people had stated opinions within the meetings with which the EV team members did not agree? David Bassot's experience raised the possibility that the EV team members would seek to ensure their recommendations prevailed, and thus possibly overruled young people's opinions. (For a further parental example, see page 161).

Young people might have been unlikely to present opinions divergent from the EV team members. Many of the recommendations had previously been discussed with the young people in the assessment week and any differences in opinion might have been dealt with then. The young people's silence at the meetings might not be due to feeling 'shut off', marginalised or criticised, but because they had stated their opinions, had heard the information before and indeed had no additional comments nor questions at the meetings.

Comparing the EV and FNA Meetings

Young people were involved in important ways, within their meetings. In most cases, young people and/ or their parental representatives were present at their meetings. Young people were asked for their opinions

of their futures: within the FNA meetings themselves and, before the EV meetings, within the EV assessments. Young people were offered the opportunity within each type of meeting to ask questions, and to state their opinions on decisions/ recommendations.

In terms of actively participating within the meetings, however, the young people contributed little. Most young people scarcely spoke at their meetings. When the young people did speak, they often only answered specific questions asked to them by professionals, and they typically made very short statements. Young people rarely took the opportunities to ask questions, and tended to contribute little of their own opinions at the meetings. Young people's participation within the meetings seemed constrained by the structure of the meetings, how the meetings typically proceeded, and how professional expertise was expressed (particularly vis a vis the young people's opinions).

Many FNA participants voiced dissatisfaction with young people's involvement within the meetings. This chapter only provided a glimpse of the distress expressed by certain parents and young people—perhaps more adequately described in Traci Miadich's case study (Chapter Nine). Far less dissatisfaction about young people's involvement was expressed by EV participants even though—proportionate to the length of each meeting—EV young people spoke far less at their meetings than the FNA young people (on average, four times **fewer** contributions). Young people seemed to **feel** more disempowered (and on a few occasions, more empowered) by the FNA meetings than the EV young people.

From the above analysis, a variety of differences might explain the different levels of satisfaction between the two types of meetings:

Table G: Differences between the FNA and EV Meetings, that might affect young people's comfort and involvement

FNA Meetings	EV Meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a group, professionals were often not sensitive to young people's comfort as individuals, certain professionals were not sensitive to young people's comfort (while other professionals tried to modify insensitive actions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a group and as individuals, professionals were usually sensitive to young people's comfort
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on average 9 minutes for each meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on average, 45 minutes for each full meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people had little pre-meeting preparation • professionals did not always carry out their pre-meeting assessments, and distribute to other professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people prepared for most recommendations by pre-meeting assessments • professionals completed reports, and collaborated on recommendations during preceding team meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professionals had difficulty at meetings dealing with young people's 'unrealistic' opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people's opinions previously asked during intensive EV assessments. No 'unrealistic' opinions raised by young people at EV meetings

Certainly, the EV meetings displayed several features that would suggest improvement in how the FNA meetings were structured, proceeded and how FNA professionals interacted with the young people (for further discussion, see pages 278-288).

Both meetings' structures and proceedings appeared largely oriented to the expression of professional expertise. The timing and placement of the meetings were largely determined by the difficulties of bringing together the large number of professionals, with young people and parents. Both types of meetings were dominated time-wise and verbally by the reporting of assessments/ updates from professionals. Young people's opinions were always evaluated by professionals. In the case of the EV meetings, young people's opinions were typically evaluated within the preceding assessments and, to a lesser degree, within the preceding team meetings. In the case of the FNA meetings, young people's opinions were

often evaluated within the meetings themselves. If Kirp's professional framework is primarily defined by its recourse to professional expertise, this exploration of young people's involvement clearly indicated the dominance of the professional framework within both types of meetings.

Professional expertise was necessitated within the meetings by bureaucratic requirements. The internal bureaucracy of the Young Adult and Adolescent team required assessing professionals, and relevant outside professionals, to be present at the EV meetings. Colburne guide-lines largely determined which professionals had to be present at the FNA meetings. The timing of the FNA meetings was loosely required by Scottish legislation and specified by Colburne Region's bureaucracy. EV and FNA meetings were thus in some ways structured by bureaucratic frameworks, and the FNA meetings also by a legalistic framework.

The FNA meetings appeared to be structured to fulfil bureaucratic and legal requirements—arguably necessary to meet young people's rights—but resulted in high participant dissatisfaction over the lack of most young people's involvement. EV meetings were not a right, guaranteed in legislation, of the young people. On the other hand, the EV professionals and, as a result the EV meetings, appeared to have a more positive approach to assessment and to take more positive action to ensure young people's comfort within the meetings. Young people's lack of involvement was not a source of dissatisfaction for EV participants. Instead, EV participants tended to voice dissatisfaction over the content and results of the meetings. These issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT: RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS OF THE EV AND FNA MEETINGS

The previous Chapter considered one facet of the Educational-Vocational (EV) and Future Needs Assessments (FNA) meetings' approaches to the 'transitional problem': young people's involvement in the meetings. This Chapter builds on that discussion to consider another facet: how the inter-disciplinary meetings approached the 'transitional problem' through making recommendations/ decisions.

A potential tension was raised between 'assessment' and 'active' meeting models, in Chapter Six. The 'assessment' model emphasised test results and recommendations. The 'active' model emphasised decisions for future action. The concluding discussion (page 109) suggested that a tension between the models was not inevitable. The models could be two parts of one process: assessments could result in recommendations, that in turn result in decisions, that in turn result in action. The discussion pointed out, however, that participants' descriptions—of the EV meetings in particular—raised a potential tension between 'assessment' and 'active' models. Did the EV and FNA meetings in practice easily combine both models? Did EV meetings in practice appear to emphasise assessment and not make decisions for future action? Did FNA meetings in practice appear to emphasise decisions for future action?

Although inter-disciplinary meetings may bring various professionals together, research has criticised such meetings for failing to result in actual collaboration between meeting participants (for example, Elliott & Sheridan 1992, p.327, Huebner & Gould 1987, pp.428-429, Johnson et al. 1987, p.524). Parents (and presumably young people, if they attended) were noted as being scarcely involved in such meetings at all (Elliott & Sheridan 1992, p.327 and Johnson et al. 1987, pp.524-525). Was there evidence of consensual decision-making and collaboration in the EV and FNA meetings? Who contributed to the construction of the 'transitional problem' and its 'solutions', and in what ways?

According to some transitional literature, the scope of transitional issues addressed by inter-disciplinary teams should be broad. For young people to participate 'successfully' in the community, they need to participate in a variety of work, personal and social roles (see for example, Halpern 1989, p.21 Hardman & McDonnell 1987, p.495; and Knox & Parmenter 1990, p.53). The

desired goals of employment, community living, and social and leisure opportunities should therefore be addressed (Johnson et al. 1987, p.522). What subjects were discussed at the EV and FNA meetings and what decisions/ recommendations resulted? Did the range represent a broad or narrow conceptualisation of transitional goals?

From their study of inter-disciplinary meetings, Elliott and Sheridan conclude that meetings' decisions were sometimes not implemented because the "*who, what, [and] when*" aspects of decisions were not clearly stated at meetings (1992 p.328) Fenton et al. suggest that decisions be summarised at the end of meetings and minutes made of the meetings (1979 p.542). Were EV and FNA meeting participants clear on what decisions/ recommendations were made, who was responsible for implementation and the time-tables for implementation? Were decisions/ recommendations summarised at the meetings? What written records were kept of the meetings and who received/ kept these records?

Elliott and Sheridan conclude that at least one meeting participant must provide short-term follow-up after the meetings to ensure that satisfactory progress is being made, and to allow for adjustments in plans (1992 p.328). Further, Johnson et al. (1987) insist that transitional programming must be evaluated both for each individual and for young people as a group. Such evaluations can ensure that the inter-disciplinary meetings and recommendations/ decisions are effectively and successfully matching the young people's interests. What follow-up occurred after the EV and FNA meetings? Did the meeting participants know what happened to decisions/ recommendations? What evaluations were carried out of the EV and FNA meetings, both for the individual young people and for the young people as a group?

Material will be presented in the next sections that addresses these questions for each meeting type. At the end of each section, a short summary answer will be proposed. After each question is considered for each meeting type, the chapter will conclude with a comparative consideration of how these inter-disciplinary meetings constructed and addressed the 'transitional problem' through recommendation-/ decision-making.

The Educational-Vocational (EV) Meetings

The 'Assessment' versus 'Active' Model

Mark's introductions suggested an 'assessment' model for the EV meetings. Mark typically explained the EV meetings to the young people in terms of professionals' reports and recommendations: the young people would hear about their strengths and weaknesses (four of five meetings) and/or recommendations would be made to the young people (three of five meetings). In terms of time, the bulk of the meetings was taken up with team members' reports and recommendations.

Recommendations were rarely made that would result in direct action. Most commonly, specific information was given to the young people on possible opportunities. For example, the recreationist might support a young person's interest in swimming and provide a list of community pools. The second most common type of recommendation made suggestions to the young people based on their tested abilities (tested during the intensive assessment week). For example, a young person might be advised to avoid tasks that required manual speed, if s/he did not score highly on timed dexterity tests. The EV meetings typically provided advice and information, and did not organise action.

'Recommendations' was the predominant terminology used within the EV meetings. EV professionals almost always spoke of 'recommendations' and seldom spoke of 'decisions'. Written reports and minutes similarly used the term 'recommendations' and not 'decisions'. (Young people and parents rarely spoke within the meetings, and did not use either 'recommendations' or 'decisions'.) In almost all recommendations, young people would have to decide to implement the recommendation, for action to follow.

A very small number of recommendations did outline further action. One such recommendation was found in most meetings: the vocational liaison officer's promise to refer young people to Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). In part, more action-oriented recommendations could not be made because of who attended the EV meetings. No outside agency representative attended who would be working with the young people once they left school. For example, no Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) representative attended, nor someone from the housing agencies. School personnel and an Easter Seal Society (ESS) Nurse were the outside

professionals who attended the meetings. These professionals would not be working with the young people in the longer term, as the young people would soon be outwith their agencies' mandates. By being separate from the educational system and other currently involved agencies, the EV team members could provide a fresh assessment of the young people largely unbiased by past impressions. The team members could be a future resource for the young people when they left school: the team specifically worked with young adults. On the other hand, the EV meetings were isolated from the rest of the community by their rehabilitation centre setting, and could not promise future action by other community agencies or employers.

Noelle criticised the EV meetings' concentration on assessment and recommendations:

The disadvantage is that it's all assessment. And then what? ... We know the student is capable of being placed somewhere, but is there someone to get the placements?

In themselves, Noelle did not criticise the accuracy of the assessments and recommendations. She criticised the lack of action that resulted from these assessments.

One parent repeatedly voiced her considerable disappointment, throughout her post-meeting interview, that the meeting failed to provide specifics about post-school opportunities for her daughter. According to three EV team members, the meetings' function to assess and make recommendations—and not to make decisions and promise action—was constantly stressed to the parents (and presumably to the young people). Despite this emphasis, these three professionals felt that parents still expected decisions and future action as a result of the EV meetings. Did the disappointment of parental expectations occur because of poor communication, or were the EV meetings failing to meet what parents (and young people?) wanted: practical help in the future and, most specifically, actual job placements?

An exception to the dominance of the 'assessment' model was Val Trudeau's meeting. Over half of the full meeting was dedicated to discussing Val Trudeau's future educational plans. The outside professionals who would have to enact such plans with Val Trudeau (the school personnel) were present. Notably, both Val Trudeau and her mother were highly satisfied with their meeting (see page 207). Val Trudeau's meeting displayed the possibility

of EV meetings combining both 'assessment' and 'action' into one process, and the resulting high satisfaction of the young people and parents.

Summary answer: All but one EV meeting seemed to follow an 'assessment' model. Dissatisfaction was raised by some participants at the inadequacy of this model to help young people substantially when they left school. In part, the meetings were unable to combine assessment with promised action because post-school community agency representatives were not present at the meetings. As the description of the EVs indicated in Chapter Two, the EVs were officially described as delivering assessment, and did not advertise themselves as promising action.

Who Contributed to The Construction of The 'Transitional Problem' and its 'Solutions'?

Fieldwork indicated four key sites where the 'transitional problem' and its 'solutions' were actively constructed:

- 1) in the initial EV assessments;
- 2) in the evaluation and write-up of these assessments;
- 3) in the team meetings; and
- 4) in the full meetings (the last site being used only once, in Val Trudeau's meetings).

How did the various participant groups—young people, parents and professionals—typically contribute to the construction in each site?

In the initial assessments, young people, parents and outside professionals sometimes suggested particular issues they wished assessed (for example, a young person's diet). The EV team members set and conducted the assessments, taking into account these suggested issues.

Team members evaluated the assessments' results and wrote up the results and recommendations in their reports. Sometimes young people were asked by team members to reflect on professionals' recommendations during the assessment period. Team members' reports tended to be phrased in relation to what young people said or did during the assessments. Recreation, physiotherapy and occupational therapy reports in particular tended to relate their recommendations directly with young people's comments during their assessments. The reports and recommendations thus placed considerable emphasis on young people's contributions in the construction of the 'transitional problem' and the suggested 'solutions' (for example, see page 144).

Professionals met in the team meetings, without the young people and parents. EV team members reported their findings and made their recommendations. Discussion of recommendations was most likely to occur during these meetings, as opposed to the following meetings with young people and parents. Conflicting recommendations were sometimes raised and resolved. In four meetings, outside professionals questioned a recommendation and/ or added new information that affected the recommendation. On three occasions, the outside professional's comments resulted in alterations of the recommendation. Professionals often discussed the most appropriate approach to take in the following full meeting with the young people and parents (for example, see case study of Val Trudeau's meeting, Chapter 9).

Generally, the subjects raised in the team meetings were identical with subjects raised in the full meetings. Some exceptions, however, were found. Young people's home situation was typically discussed **only** in the team meetings (four of the five meetings where such a subject was raised). Potentially sensitive psychological or personal issues, and parental finances were not discussed with the young people (or parents) but raised in the team meetings. These subjects typically inspired considerable discussion. Particular approaches were suggested in the team meetings for future follow-up on these subjects. Young people's consent and participation presumably would be required for these plans to be enacted, but the young people and parents did not participate in the construction of the plans at this stage.

The young people (and parents) were invited to attend the following full meetings. Young people (and parents) had the opportunity to hear the coordinated presentation of results and recommendations. These reports and recommendations were typically quite long and delivered uninterrupted. Each EV team member typically made at least three and sometimes up to five recommendations. Discussion was atypical at the full meetings.

Young people (and parents) were always asked if they had any questions about the reports and recommendations. Parents contributed more substantive comments and questions than young people in the meetings. Two (of five) parents asked three times each for more elaboration on a particular point, and one parent requested practical details about carrying out a recommendation. Four (of five) parents reported on change since the original assessment. Only one young person and one parent, however, questioned a recommendation in the meeting. When David Bassot stated his opposition to a

psychology referral, the recommendation was not altered and, in fact, plans were made to enact the recommendation (see page 143). A similar pattern occurred when Mrs Nimes voiced her doubts on two recommendations. Whatever the suitability of these recommendations, the young person's and parent's opposition did not affect the recommendations.

Young people and parents might have rarely questioned or disagreed for the simple reason that they agreed with all the results and recommendations. Some evidence by which to evaluate this possibility could be found in pre- and post-meeting interviews. Before their meetings, young people were asked what they wanted to do in the next year and in the next five years. Two young people I interviewed expressed a desire to work in the next five years. This desire was reflected in the recommendations at the meetings. Both young people raised other subjects not addressed in the young people's meetings (future education goals and social opportunities). Neither young person asked about these subjects within their meetings, although one young person specifically criticised this omission in our post-meeting interview. Two parents I interviewed had disagreed with particular assessment results and recommendations made at the meetings. One parent (mentioned above) had protested against two recommendations at the EV meeting. The other parent made no mention of her disagreement with a recommendation, and her questioning of a particular assessment finding, within the meeting. The interviews suggested that young people and parents might not necessarily voice their questions or disagreements within the full meetings.

In one meeting, the young person, parent and EV professionals did appear to discuss recommendations and work together towards consensual decisions. Val Trudeau, Mrs Trudeau and the team members joined to persuade the school personnel that Val Trudeau's style of education must be changed. In this discussion, participants tended to take shorter turns speaking and dialogues between participants often occurred. No other full meeting appeared to have such a decision-making agenda, and no other full meeting has such a large amount of discussion over the substantive material. Was there a connection between a co-ordinating, decision-making agenda and a more extensive discussion?

Summary answer: When professionals disagreed with certain recommendations, these disagreements were resolved in the team meetings by consensus. Professionals at the team meetings would develop a co-ordinated

package of recommendations and a collaborative approach, to be presented at the full meetings to the young people and parents. In only one meeting did young people and parents appear to work actively together at the meetings with professionals, to construct a consensual plan. Young people, and to a lesser extent parents, collaborated more with professionals **before** the EV meetings—through their contributions to assessments—than at the EV meetings themselves. Thus young people seemed most involved in the construction of the ‘transitional problem’ and less involved in the construction of the ‘solutions’. (See Table H next page.)

Broad or Narrow Conceptualisation of Transitional Goals

The EV team members represented a broad range of disciplines. Except for the team leader, each team member attending presented her report and recommendations.¹ As many professionals suggested, the team could provide a ‘holistic’ view of the young people, in areas ranging from housing to recreation to vocational abilities.

Employment, recreation, psychological findings and issues related to independent living (finances, housing) were mentioned far more times, and in far more meetings, than subjects concerning health or diet. Employment was a central theme running through not only vocational assessment reports, but also assessment reports by the occupational therapist and the psychologist. Parents and young people also focused on employment in the recommendations they remembered and their expectations of the meeting. Of all subjects, employment appeared to be the one most often raised by professionals and the one most salient to parents and young people. Ironically, actual employment opportunities were outwith the remit of all professionals present.² (See Table I, page 165 for numerical comparison of subjects raised.)

Meetings appeared constrained by the amount of material to be reported rather than a fixed time schedule. Time constraints were never raised to restrict unexpected discussions or questions, from any participant. The breadth of the proposed ‘solution’ was presumably not hampered by the time set aside for each meeting.

The reports were accused of failing to provide new information. One young person, three parents and eight professionals recognised that much of the information was already known to the young people and parents. One

¹Note that **only** EV team members, and not outside professionals, made reports and recommendations at the EV meetings.

²As young people and parents spoke so little during the meetings, a direct comparison was not illuminating between participant groups, on subjects raised at the meetings.

Table H: Key Sites of EV Meetings' Construction of the 'Transitional Problem' and its 'Solutions'

Professionals' Contributions	Key Sites	Young People's/ Parents' Contributions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outside professionals suggested particular issues to assess • EV team members set which questions to ask and which tests to do with young people 	INITIAL ASSESSMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people and parents suggested particular issues to assess • young people (and to a lesser extent, parents) provided content of assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EV team members evaluated young people's answers and test results • EV team members decided on recommendations • EV team members wrote up reports 	RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • goals and interests raised by young people in assessments often directed recommendations • young people sometimes asked to reflect on EV team members' recommendations, during assessment period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EV team members reported findings and recommendations • professionals often decided on approach for full meeting • professionals sometimes took opportunity to discuss particular findings • sometimes co-ordination or alteration of recommendations • sensitive subjects sometimes raised and plans made 	TEAM MEETINGS	(young people and parents not present)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • could repeat team meeting (see above), but in practice recommendations not changed • could make decisions with young people/ parents for future action, but rarely done 	FULL MEETINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities for young people and parents to question results/ recommendations rarely taken up (and when taken up, not successful in affecting change) • could make decisions with professionals for future action, but rarely done

Table I: Number of EV Meetings where Subject Mentioned*

Subject	Number of EV Meetings (out of 7 meetings)
recreation	7
future employment	7
career aspirations	6
employment opportunities	3
summer jobs	3
training options	5
Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS)	4
tested vocational abilities	4**
vocational interests testing	5
tested mental abilities	7
attitude	7
motivation and sense of responsibility	5
emotional feelings	5
finances	7
future housing	6
present home situation	5
physio exercises	5
future education	5
transportation	4
health	3
physio equipment	2
occupational therapy aids/ posture	2
diet	2

* Classifying subjects raised at the meetings was clearly a subjective task. The chart aims to show the range of subjects raised, and certain trends rather than advocate a particular typology.

** Plus one meeting where lack of assessment was noted.

professional explained that the assessments did not promise to provide new information, but an up-to-date assessment profile that could be used by other agencies. Nevertheless, other meeting participants (seven participants, including two parents) expressed considerable disappointment when the meetings did not present new information. Three professionals particularly noted the success of the meetings when the meetings **did** present new information. The perceived success of the 'assessment' model seemed to depend on whether new information was brought to light. By this criterion, several participants voiced their (dis)satisfaction.

Recommendations were made in direct relation to the assessment results. Few differences were found between the subjects raised within the meetings, and the subjects to which the recommendations referred.

On average, each meeting made sixteen recommendations (ranging from ten to nineteen)³. The recommendations tended to be very specific in the information they provided. For example, if young people wished to know about accessible housing, the social worker passed over information listing possible housing organisations and agencies. If the psychologist made a suggestion on vocational abilities, a specific career (such as graphic printing or clerical work) was typically identified. The number and specificity of recommendations indicated a comprehensive and thorough approach to the 'transitional problem'.

Summary answer: The EV meetings covered a wide range of transitional issues—from employment to housing to emotional well-being—and had time to consider any particular issue in depth. Some participants were dissatisfied, however, by the lack of new information provided.

Clarity of Recommendations

The team leader always concluded the meetings. In some ways, Mark's final statements provided some summary of what was reported at the meeting:

- Mark stated a timetable for future educational decisions (Val Trudeau's meeting)

³These numbers were based on my interpretations of statements. Sometimes team members clearly identified their statements as recommendations but this was not a consistent pattern. My criteria for inclusion were relatively conservative: if the statement was itself identified as a recommendation; if phrases such as 'X should' were used; and if future plans were laid down, such as 'I will refer you ...'.

- Mark praised Tom Shield's insight about his future career (Tom Shield's meeting)
- Mark asked David Bassot if he could repeat any of the meeting's recommendations (David Bassot's meeting)
- Mark identified the "*main*" recommendation (Lara Nimes' meeting)

On the other hand, the statements did not provide a comprehensive summary of the meetings.

After the meetings, all participants reported that recommendations were made but participants did not remember all the recommendations. Young people and parents typically needed considerable prompting in post-meeting interviews to remember any recommendation. No two participants ever made the same list of recommendations (after a particular meeting). On only one occasion did all participants at a meeting write down the same recommendation⁴. (On the other hand, no participant recorded a recommendation that directly contradicted one recorded by another participant.) Given that participants appeared unable to remember a comprehensive list of recommendations, the written minutes were presumably essential reminders for participants of the recommendations made.

While the recommendations' information was typically specific, the recommendations were less definitive as to who was responsible for acting on these recommendations. This lack of specificity was reflected in participants' responses in post-meeting questionnaires. After only one meeting did **all** participants note the same person as being responsible for carrying out a recommendation. Of all participants, young people were most consistently noted as the people responsible for acting on the recommendations (28 times, versus the next highest mention of twenty times for school personnel). (See Table J, next page)

Young people themselves tended to acknowledge their responsibility. Other participants were perceived as responsible, but they themselves did not always note their own responsibility for implementing the recommendations. For example, after one meeting seven participants noted that a particular professional was responsible, but this professional did not. This pattern repeated itself to a lesser extent for thirteen professionals in six of seven meetings. One young person and her parent said they could not name anyone

⁴Exact word repetition was not a criterion for the 'same' recommendation. Rather, statements were included that addressed the same subject. The same subject criterion was used loosely. For example, "*specific recreation programs*", "*increase social*

Table J: People Responsible for Implementing Recommendations in EV Meetings*

Person Named as Responsible	Number of Times Named
young person/ client	28
school personnel	20
EV vocational liaison officer	14
EV social worker	14
EV recreationist	7
EV team leader	6
parents	5
family	4
EV psychologist	4
Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS)**	4
EV dietician	3
young person's family doctor	1

* According to participants in post-meeting questionnaires

** Note that participants did not name a specific person within the VRS as responsible for recommendation(s)

and physical activities outside school hours” and “up physical activities outside school and social” were all considered to address the same subject.

as responsible, in post-meeting interviews. Even if information and future action were specified, recommendations could still fall through if people were unclear about who was responsible for action. If participants were not clear on responsibilities leaving the meetings, once again the minutes emerged as essential records.

The opportunity for follow-up meetings in four months was raised in four of the five full meetings young people attended, although no specific dates were set within the meetings themselves. These follow-up meetings placed the recommendations in a time framework. The time framework, however, was vague and has no staging points (beyond the 4 months). This vagueness could be contrasted with three recommendations that did have specific people responsible to do certain things at certain times: arrangements were made for the young person to meet with a psychologist; when dietary follow-up appointments were suggested; and when a VRS referral was recommended. These recommendations were almost always raised by the young people and parents in post-meeting interviews. Did this indicate that the recommendations with specific information, specific future plans, and specific timetables were more salient and useful to the young people and parents? Minutes of the meetings were mailed out to the young people, whether or not the young people attended the meetings. For two meetings, the minutes reflected the discussion at the team meetings, attributing changes in recommendations to certain people and mentioning outside professionals' perspectives. Recommendations were listed either at the end of the minutes, or contained within the text. The combination of the meetings' minutes and recommendation lists could provide the summaries that were not given at the end of the meetings.

As summaries, these minutes lacked much of the specificity found in the meetings. Not all recommendations mentioned in the meetings were recorded. Details of timing and who was responsible were sometimes missing. Once, an inaccurate recommendation (inaccurate in comparison to both the recording of the meetings and the written professional's report) was written down. The minutes did not always provide a comprehensive and accurate summary of what took place at the meetings.

I was surprised to find that some EV team members' reports contained considerable information and three recommendations not raised in the meetings. Young people (and parents) were not provided with the opportunity to hear and discuss this information with professionals, at the

meetings. I investigated whether information and recommendations were excluded from the meetings because they covered sensitive subjects and were thus not spoken of in front of the larger group. While in some cases such a reason could be valid, in others the information and recommendations in no way seemed sensitive material.

Summary answer: Recommendations, people responsible and timetables were not comprehensively summarised at the end of each meeting, or in each minute of the meetings. EV participants rarely recognised the same list of recommendations for each meeting. Remembered recommendations, however, never contradicted each other. Rarely was the same person recognised as responsible for implementing a recommendation. Minutes were sent out to all young people but were not necessarily accurate and comprehensive records of the meetings and verbal reports.

Follow-Up from the Meetings

Most EV team members cited ineffective and inadequate follow-up as a disadvantage of the meetings. Certain EV team members wondered if they should be more involved in checking with young people whether they had decided to act on the recommendations. These team members questioned whether the young people had found the recommendations helpful.

Recently, the EV team began to evaluate its EV programme. Young people and parents who had been through the programme were asked for their views on postal questionnaires. The EV team were organising focus groups of young people, parents and outside professionals to discuss the EV assessments. The EV assessments had no standard procedure by which the effectiveness and usefulness of recommendations could be tracked, for young people as a group or for individuals.

Summary answer: Ineffective and inadequate follow-up were perceived as a disadvantage by certain EV team members. The EV team was beginning an one-off evaluation of the EV programme.

The Future Needs Assessment (FNA) Meetings

The 'Assessment' vs. 'Active' Model

The majority of introductions to the FNA meetings displayed a combination of the 'active' and 'assessment' models. In eight of fourteen

meetings, three goals were typically combined: “*bringing people together*” and “*sharing information*” so as to ensure a “*planned and smooth transition*”. If people were brought together to share assessment information in order to build a ‘planned and smooth transition’, then an easy partnership between the ‘assessment’ and ‘active’ models was suggested by the FNA meetings’ introductions.

Indeed, the FNA meetings’ structure over time suggested a progression from assessment to deciding future action. The whole FNA process was formally divided into at least three meetings. A FNA1 meeting could be considered an introductory sharing of information; assessments would provide the information basis for the FNA2 decision-making meeting; the FNA3 meeting could be viewed as a follow-up meeting to up-date FNA2 decisions (see pages 31-32 for further description).

FNA1 meetings did fulfil an introductory function. Professionals were introduced to each other, and to the young people and parents; professionals currently working with the young people (for example, the educational psychologist, the teacher representative, the Community Medical Officers) did share their evaluations of the young people with the group. The young people were always asked about their tentative ideas for their futures.

FNA2 meetings often lacked their full assessment basis required by bureaucratic and legal requirements:

- 1) The medical staff were required to examine the young people—with the young people’s/ parents’ permission—before the meetings. Every young person had such a medical examination. Official medical reports were to be circulated to professional participants, before the FNA2 meetings. Not all professional files contained such medical reports.
- 2) Other professionals (social workers, specialist careers officers and educational psychologists) were required to complete full assessments and reports of these assessments. The reports were to be disseminated to all professionals before the FNA2 meetings. Reports of the Social Work Section 13 assessments were found only in two cases in any professional participants’ files (out of seven cases where the reports should have been filed). Specialist careers officers and educational psychologists typically interviewed the young people and parents before FNA2 meetings, but their reports were not always written before the meetings nor circulated before the FNA2 meetings. Some specialist careers officers’ and educational psychologists’ reports were made available at the meetings or mailed out later to agencies. Yet, even years after the FNA2 meetings, many agencies’ files lacked a complete set of reports.⁵

⁵Findings are based on interviews with professionals, my own investigations of the school’s, medical and some psychologists’ files, and on file contents sent to me by other professional participants.

(See Appendix E for summary of reports found in professionals' files)

Assessment reports that were distributed (to professionals only) at or after the meetings could not significantly inform the professionals during the meetings; the participants thus had to rely on professionals' verbal reports of their assessments, at the meetings. The missing Social Work Section 13 assessments were perhaps the most significant gap. The Section 13 assessments were required by law (Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986) and were young people's supposed pathway to social services in the future.

Professionals (except social workers) did report their views of the young people at the FNA2 meetings. For the first time, the specialist careers officers reported on their recent interviews with the young people. Otherwise, the reports differed little in substance or form from what was reported in FNA1 meetings. The reports—verbal or written—were not assessments in the sense of testing and searching out abilities; rather, the present situation of the young people (family life, educational progress, medical functioning and diagnosis) was up-dated. While 'assessments' was part of the FNA title, little assessing appeared to be done and even less assessing that particularly considered young people's **future needs**⁶. (For examples, see next chapter.)

The lines differentiating the FNA2 and FNA3 meetings were not strong. Reviewing former FNA2 meetings' decisions did not have a regular place within FNA3 meetings' agendas. Both FNA2 and FNA3 meetings typically addressed the same two options (i.e., staying at school or going to Further Education College). The lines between the meetings might be blurred because the structure no longer fitted the young people's typical leaving pattern from school. Young people were typically staying in school longer, and making decisions at the FNA2 stage—two or three years before the young people would actually leave school—might be too early to be pertinent (opinion voiced by two professionals). The focus shifted to the actual leaving meetings, which were often dedicated to discussing concrete plans for future education.

Four reasons might explain why reports were not found in files. One, the reports might not have been completed (Section 13 reports particularly fell into this category). Two, the agencies might not have distributed their own reports. Three, the reports might have been lost in the mail. Four, the reports might not have been filed in the correct place.

⁶Kennedy and Wassell (1991) make a similar conclusion in their evaluation of Colgate Region's FNAs, as does Hubbard in her 1992 thesis.

The intervening FNA meetings then might lack a clear purpose and provide little of substance, despite their formal functions both to assess and decide at the FNA2 stage and to review in following FNA meetings.⁷

The link between assessment and future action was displayed by the professionals invited to the FNA1 and following meetings. Most professionals were required to attend by official guidelines, and others by established good practice. Professionals currently working with the young people attended: the headteacher, the teacher representative with the careers' remit in the school, the educational psychologist, and the Community Medical Officers. Professionals who might provide service and support for the young people once they left school were also invited: the specialist careers officer, the social work department representative and assigned case worker⁸, and the Further Education (FE) college representative (note that employer representatives were not invited). Assessments were to be provided by both professionals presently working with the young people and those who might be working with the young people in the future.

While the range of invited professionals might make inter-agency co-operation possible, not all invited professionals attended. An educational psychologist was absent from three of fourteen meetings; a social work department representative was unable to come to eight meetings; a social work case worker only attended one meeting; and an occupational therapist (working with the social work department) came to another. (Fourteen FNA meetings were part of the official fieldwork.)

Several participants voiced their dissatisfaction that these professionals did not attend, as they were considered "key" people. The Section 13 case workers could have been valuable additions to any discussion of the young people's futures and essential link people between assessments and future action. The absence of a social work department representative was criticised by one parent, who expected his child to use social work services in the future. Given that few Section 13 referrals appeared to have been made and

⁷Hubbard (1992) makes a similar conclusion (see pages 34-35).

⁸To clarify the distinction between types of social workers attending the FNA meetings: the **social work department representative** was invited to every FNA meeting and passed on information to area social work teams about the young people (thus the social work department representative did not work with the young people directly); area social work teams assigned team members to work directly with the young people and these **case social workers** should carry out the Section 13 assessment for individual young people, make and distribute the Section 13 report, and attend second and following FNA meetings.

even fewer assessments completed, the absence of a case worker was not surprising. Colburne guidelines required the educational psychologists to carry out the FNA paperwork. Without the educational psychologist present, potentially the FNA procedures might not take place smoothly.

FNA meetings were never rescheduled due to professionals' inability to attend. In part, the bureaucratic structuring of the FNAs prevented re-scheduling (that is, the one day set aside for each school three times a year by the Education Department did not provide a framework that allowed for meetings' re-scheduling). The ability of the FNA meetings, however, to provide a 'smooth and planned transition' was potentially hampered by the absence of several key professionals—both professionals who would organise the FNA paperwork (and make assessments) and professionals who would act in the future.

Summary answer: The introductions to the FNA meetings, and the trio of FNA meetings, suggested a progression from assessment to actions. In practice, assessments were not always completed, and written reports not always disseminated. Professionals' verbal reports at meetings tended to be up-dates of the young people's present situation, rather than assessments of their future needs or their abilities in relation to their futures. Not all 'key' professionals attended meetings. A limited number of decisions were made at meetings, and the same issues tended to be considered from FNA1 to FNA3 meetings. The FNA meetings thus promised a more substantial combination of 'assessment' and 'action' models than the meetings delivered.

Who Contributed to the Construction of the 'Transitional Problem' and its 'Solutions'?

Subjects were raised by four different methods, within the FNA meetings:

- 1) Professionals raised subjects when they made their verbal reports.
- 2) Subjects were raised when professionals questioned one another.
- 3) Parents occasionally raised subjects by asking questions.
- 4) Young people raised subjects when they stated their future goals.

These methods differed in both the ways the subjects were raised, and the ways with which the subjects were dealt.

Professional reports were presented at the request of the headteacher. After the meetings' introductions, the doctor (the Community Medical Officer), the education psychologist and the teacher representative usually gave their reports consecutively. The specialist careers officer's reports were

typically given near the end of the meetings. On no occasion were these reports interrupted by other participants. Occasionally the reporters asked the young people or parents for agreement on what was being presented, breaking up the reports somewhat. Neither young people nor parents ever withheld their agreement.

No young person or parent asked for elaboration nor questioned any of the reports, even when possibly unknown jargon was used. Two young people afterwards indicated that they disagreed with report details but were too 'embarrassed' to question the reporters within the meetings. Two parents and one young person did occasionally add details to the reports, but only one of these additions was accepted by the reporter. A few professionals added to the reports, and these additions were all supported by the reporter. One professional asked for elaboration from a report; two different professionals disagreed with two reports' conclusions (see pages 127 and 128-129). Although little discussion usually resulted from reports, only professionals were likely to question the reports, and to affect change.

Subjects were also raised through professionals questioning one another. Professionals used their questioning either to disagree with other professionals' statements, or to raise requirements not already addressed within the meetings. Both Clive's and Ruth's interactions with Louise demonstrated professionals' disagreement (see pages 127 and 131, and Appendix D). The lack of Section 13 referrals was raised by two professionals who were not themselves involved in the Section 13 process, and interjected into the two meetings just as the meetings were about to conclude.

Professionals reported considerable inter-professional conflict within the meetings. Four professionals recognised conflicts between the medical and educational representatives. The supposed area of conflict was the prioritisation of medical versus educational needs⁹. No evidence of such conflict was found within the meetings observed. Rather, a variety of professionals critiqued the career teacher's conclusions. One professional said that the school personnel should offer more to individuals than they were prepared to do. No school personnel raised difficulties with particular agency personnel, so their views on such conflict were unknown.

Several professionals raised their disappointment with the social work representative's contribution to the meeting. One professional noted how the

⁹Such conflict was found by Thomson et al. (1991) in their research on Scottish recording procedures (for students with special educational needs).

social work department was presently so pressured that social workers were unable to contribute satisfactorily. Certainly, the social work department representative's verbal contributions to the meetings were almost non-existent. The social work department representative perceived her role as listening and reporting back to the young people's local social work team. She also cited another role as a "gate-keeper" for social work services. The social work department representative explained in our interview that social work services went far beyond Adult Training Centres (a potentially unpopular option to young people and parents) to housing and recreational opportunities. Despite this broad remit, such social work services were only raised and discussed in one meeting observed. The social work department representative was never asked by the head teacher (as other professionals were) for her views within the meetings nor did she ever volunteer any information. The social work department representative honestly admitted why she sometimes did not draw attention to herself:

... in fact although I should have said, about what Section 13 is about, and what is available for the child, I actually said not a cheep ... I'd been involved with the child and the parent, over an adaptation that had gone slightly awry. And I didn't want to have a big profile. If the mother had turned round and said, "I remember you," I would have owned up to it, "I remember you," and we would have done business. ... Maybe, OK, I shouldn't. My attitude to that is when the child comes to the second FNA ah which is really comes up front, ... I believe, that there will be a worker ...

Given that only one case worker did attend a FNA meeting, the representation of social work services did not seem guaranteed. No examples were observed within the meetings where parents and the social work department representative entered into any conflict. One parent did generate considerable discussion over social work provision, but no social work department representative was present at the meeting to 'gate-keep' or provide information.

On certain occasions, parents did seem in conflict with other professional participants. For example, one parent resisted the label of a 'troublesome parent':

Mrs Thomson *Well, the O.T. [occupational therapist] was supposed to come back to me six months ago [Mrs Thomson laughed].*

...
Ruth *But you can tell her your your free and frank opinions,—Mrs Thomson—*

Mrs Thomson —Yes, I will do.—[general laughter] () *That's not very nice, Dr Bathe.* [Ruth]()

Colin *It's an opportunity for a frank exchange of views =*

Mrs Thomson *Yes. =*

Colin *Whatever . =*

Mrs Thomson *I've had a few of those () over the years. =*

Ruth *You're not quiet. =*

Mrs Thomson *Yes, I am quiet. ()*

Mr Thomson *She's not. =*

Mrs Thomson *Aren't I quiet? ()*

Mr Thomson *Ask one of the social workers that.* [General laughter, especially Mrs Thomson]

Mrs Thomson *But that's the only area that I sort of tend to voice my opinions?*

[No social worker was present at the meeting.]

Mrs Thomson here tried to argue against Ruth's characterisation of her (with little help from Mr Thomson). Three other times within the meeting, Mrs Thomson similarly argued against accusations of being "*free and frank*", "*reluctant*" and being less than "*tactful*". Note that Mrs Thomson did not defend herself by criticising what the social work department had failed to do. She defended herself by denying her general assertiveness. Was Mrs Thomson trying to avoid the label of a 'troublesome parent'? Her attempts were unsuccessful: after the meeting, certain professionals continued to discuss the difficulties Mrs Thomson had caused.

When directly asked about so-called 'troublesome parents' in our interviews, three professionals explained that parents usually gained that label because they disagreed with the status quo and that they actually should be highly valued for causing change. At the same time, all professionals perceived the meetings as dealing with such parents "*somewhat dismissively*" (interview with Eddie). The reasons cited were either the limited time set aside for the meetings or the lack of true parental inclusion within the meetings.

When parents raised questions, discussion was often generated but it did not seem to affect or result in actual decisions. To take one example, one parent worried about his daughter's psychological state. A considerable discussion resulted, with various professionals reassuring the parent that his daughter's present attitude was understandable under the stressful conditions. The conversation ended with a new topic being introduced by the headteacher, despite the parent continuing to voice his concern. Arguably, the daughter was not in need of psychological support. On the other hand, subjects raised by professionals did tend to result in planned action; change did not usually result from parents' additions.

In one exception, a parent did suggest a particular topic that became the subject of a decision. Her statement, however, differed from other parents' contributions: she referred to a decision made in a previous meeting, which had not been raised at the present meeting. Potentially, parents' contributions were more likely to influence the meetings' decisions if they referred to past decisions.

In contrast, young people's statements about their desired future did generally raise subjects that became a decision-making focus. At meetings attended by young people (thirteen of fourteen meetings), the headteacher always asked the young people what they were hoping to do in the future. If the young people did not have an immediate answer, the headteacher commonly asked more and more specific questions to try to elicit some information. When the young people did raise a particular interest, the professionals interacted with it. The professionals might react to it negatively, as with John Mitchell's desire to become an accountant or graphic designer (see pages 131 and Appendix D). The professionals might explore the possibilities by which young people could fulfil their proposed objectives. For example, Tom Akroyd stated his desire to go to college at the beginning of the meeting. Over half of the following meeting was dedicated to exploring the details of this option. While the young people did not typically add to the discussion much beyond their initial statements, the subjects they raised provided the subject matter for the following discussions.

Future options were not presented systematically. Pros and cons of certain options were discussed in two of fourteen meetings. In post-meeting interviews, eight of eleven professionals felt no 'free' discussion was held over possible options. Reasons given were: the lack of options to discuss; the constrained time of the meetings; parents' lack of knowledge; the possible destructive effects upon parents of striking off numerous options beyond the young people's capabilities; and professionals coming to the meeting with recommendations already in mind. (Note that young people's lack of knowledge and the destructive effects upon young people were not raised.) The other three professionals all qualified their positive answers, saying that discussion was as free as was possible considering the meetings' time constraints.

Young people and parents were always asked at the end of meetings whether or not they were "*happy*". Young people and parents never answered that they were unhappy. Possibly, young people and parents might

not know what the decisions were (since many meetings ended without summaries—see page 183) and thus whether or not they were ‘happy’ with them. Young people and parents were not asked if they were ‘happy’ with individual decisions, but the decisions as a package. Given the speed of the meeting, they might not have been ready to evaluate the package of decisions nor to sift through the various decisions to find out those with which they might agree or disagree. Certainly, many young people and parents left the meetings with no idea what decisions had been made. (See page 184.)

The FNA meetings had to bring together disparate professionals, young people and parents to create the ‘multi-disciplinary team’. Little time was given for this co-ordination—what time could be given to team building when decisions must be made in ten to twenty minutes? In fact, certain decisions and plans seemed to be made and finalised outwith the FNA meetings. Certain professionals said that if they disagreed with the meetings’ decisions, they proceeded to make decisions and plans with the young people and parents as the professionals saw fit. What purpose did the meetings then serve? Many of the supposed advantages of an inter-agency, inter-disciplinary team would be lost. Co-ordination of services could not be guaranteed and young people might ‘fall through the cracks’. Service duplication or even contradiction might result. Certainly, participants would not be working together to create new and innovative resources, or to pressurise the community to change. They would work as individuals or, at best, small coveys of people. At the time of fieldwork, formal letters were to be sent out to parents after FNA2 meetings. These formal letters typically contained three paragraphs: one stated the procedure that occurred; the second reported the decision(s); the third indicated that parents have fourteen days in which to formally disagree with the stated decision(s). Notably, the letters were not addressed to the young people but to the parents. Only parents had the option to lodge their disagreements (presumably because the young people were under sixteen). Agreement was presumed if parents did **not** reply, rather than parents having to agree with the decisions(s) actively. Parents were perhaps unlikely to disagree as the statements were usually general. Two professionals reported that few parents ever formally disagreed with the decisions. Certainly, by setting such a short deadline and writing such general statements, parents had little incentive to do so.

Copies of these letters should have also been sent to various other participants, including the headteacher, the specialist careers officers and the

educational psychologists. Such copies could not be found consistently in professional files, even years after the FNA2 meeting. Five of the meetings observed were FNA3 meetings. For two of these young people, no letter could be found of the FNA2 meeting decisions in any professionals' files. Similarly, even six months after the two FNA2 meetings in this fieldwork, no formal letter to parents could be found within professional files. Some connection on the pathway—from the meeting to the education authority to the letter recipients to professional filing—appeared to have broken down. If professionals did not receive these letters, how likely was it that parents received them?

Summary answer: Professionals and young people tended to raise the subjects upon which decisions were made. Parents' comments were usually ignored. Professionals sometimes questioned statements but young people and parents rarely did. Parents' questioning did not usually lead to any change or additional decisions, unlike those of the professionals. A concern over inter-professional conflict was voiced by some professionals, but in this fieldwork I only observed parent-professional conflict. The lack of social work contribution was notable. Young people lacked the opportunity to disagree with the formal letter of FNA2 decisions. Parents may not have received such letters, or found nothing with which to disagree in the general statements, or have not taken active decisions to disagree.

Broad or Narrow Conceptualisation of Transitional Goals

Most of the meetings displayed similar patterns in which subjects were most frequently raised. Certain subjects were almost always raised: medical details (diagnosis, functioning and treatment) and education (present school and college opportunities). Conversely, certain subjects were raised in a minority of meetings. Despite Section 13 assessment's supposed centrality to the FNA process, the report was only mentioned six times out of fourteen meetings. (A Section 13 assessment was recognised within the meetings as being completed only once. No details of the Section 13 assessment were given at that one meeting.) Social work placement was raised in two meetings. Work experience and job opportunities were mentioned five and four times respectively. Young people's social lives, housing and recreation were seldom mentioned. From considering the pattern of subjects raised, medical and

educational topics predominated over employment, community living, social and recreational issues.¹⁰ (See Table K, next page.)

The numbers in Table K display frequency but not extent or quality of comments. Four professional participants stated their inability to extract adequate information from the meetings. These professionals then felt unprepared to participate in the following discussions. For example, the FE college representative worried that she was asked to give an opinion of the young person's suitability for specific college programmes, without fully knowing the young person's mental and physical functioning. Sometime she felt forced to give such an opinion, but she firmly believed: *"It's not good professional practice."* At least to some professionals, the poor quality of information detracted from the quality of the following discussions. Five young people and seven parents voiced that their expectations had not been met. They had expected that more would happen both in terms of recognising young people's capabilities and future action.

What future options were typically raised? The same options regularly appeared in all meetings: FE college (almost always Miller College) or staying at school. Sometimes a suitable FE college course was specified by the college representative or the specialist careers officer. When the college courses were described, they were never described in terms of what skills they might offer the young people but whether the young people would be eligible. Young people appeared to be directed to specific college courses by their perceived (dis)abilities rather than for skill opportunities. Only at one meeting were educational options other than Miller College or staying at school discussed.

What would be discussed at the meetings did appear to be constrained by the short time scheduled. Colin suggested that, if parents had subjects to discuss which were not on the agenda, these discussions should be postponed to individual interviews or future meetings outwith the FNA process (see page 120). In practice, Colin did carry out his suggestion of deferring parents' questions to other meetings.

Exactly what decisions were made at the meetings was difficult to discern. Four sources elaborated decisions made at the meetings:

- 1) As mentioned on page 183, some meetings ended with comprehensive summaries of decisions supposedly made in the meetings.

¹⁰As young people and parents spoke so little during the meetings, no direct comparison seemed useful between participant groups on subjects raised at the meetings.

Table K: Number of FNA Meetings where Subject Mentioned*

Subject	Number of FNA Meetings (out of 14 meetings)
present educational situation	13
educational progress	13
educational qualifications	10
attitude to school	9
educational marks	7
present medical situation	13
functioning	11
medical treatment	11
medical diagnosis	8
future Further Education (FE) college	12
specific FE college	9
college link course	8
future FNA meeting	11
stay at school	10
young people's future interests	9
psychologists' report	8
employment	7
work experience	5
future employment	4
Section 13 report	6**
finances (to be addressed in future)	4
sports/ hobbies	4
housing	2
Adult Training Centre	2

* Classifying subjects raised at the meetings was clearly a subjective task. The chart aims to show the range of subjects raised, and certain trends rather than advocate a particular typology.

** In three of these six meetings, lack of Section 13 referral to have an assessment done, was raised.

- 2) Professionals did write their own notes at the meetings; I accessed these notes from professionals' files.
- 3) On written questionnaires filled in by professionals immediately after each meeting, professionals were requested to list what decisions had been made. Young people and parents were similarly asked in post-meeting interviews.
- 4) For FNA2 meetings, the education authority was required to send out formal letters to parents citing the meetings' decisions.

Taken as a whole, these four sources did show strong trends of decisions made. Staying at school was overwhelmingly the most common decision: stated two times more than the next most common decision, FE college. Other decisions were noted much less consistently. These other decisions ranged from college links to social work referrals to reviewing the situation next year. Decisions were never made about housing, recreation or other social activities (although these subjects were occasionally discussed). Decisions about work experience were made in two of fourteen meetings. The subjects for decisions were even more restricted than the subjects raised at the meetings or the options described by professionals. Decisions were made about education and about very little else. Further, over two-thirds of these educational decisions only referred to where young people would be and not what courses they would be taking. For example, decisions would be made that young people would go to FE college, but a minority of these decisions specified a possible course. The decisions did seem most concerned **where** young people would be rather than **what** they would be doing there.

Summary answer: The FNA meetings tended to focus on educational placement (particularly in decisions) to the exclusion of other possible transitional goals. For example, employment was rarely raised as a subject and even more rarely was a decision made in reference to employment. The FNA meetings thus demonstrated a narrow conceptualisation of transitional goals.

Clarity of Decisions

In five of fourteen meetings, decision summaries were given by the headteacher. Distinct decisions were set out in these cases: for example, the young person would stay in school. In the other nine meetings, no such summaries were provided. Perhaps FNA1 meetings could not be expected to end with summaries of decisions, as they did not have the mandate to make decisions. But even FNA2 and FNA3 meetings—which supposedly did have decision-making mandates—did not all have summaries. Two of four FNA2 meetings and two of the five FNA3 meetings did not have decision summaries.

Four places where decisions were noted are described on pages 181 and 183. No minutes were regularly made of the meetings and sent to all participants. Little consensus existed between sources on what decisions were made. For example, take the meeting with the greatest consensus of what was decided. In this meeting, an official letter was not sent to the parent. (See Table L below.)

Table L: Participants Stating that Particular Decisions were Made—An Example of One FNA Meeting

Decision Noted:	Professionals' written post-meeting questionnaires	Professionals' records	Young person's post-meeting interview	Parent's post-meeting interview
Stay at school	6 of 7	3 of 7	Yes	Yes
Work experience	1 of 7	—	—	—
Attend FE college	2 of 7	—	Yes	Yes
No decisions made	1 of 7	1 of 7	—	—

Only one participant (a professional) did not note on her post-meeting questionnaire that the young person would stay at the school for the next two years. Within professionals' notes, however, only three of seven professionals recorded this decision. Other decisions were even more randomly noted. Work experience was only recognised as a decision by one professional in her post-meeting questionnaire: no other source stated such a decision. Only the young person, the parent and two professionals declared attendance at FE college as a decision, in post-meeting questionnaires. One professional in fact wrote that no decisions were made at the meeting, on her post-meeting questionnaire and notes. Other meetings had even more erratic recall and records of what decisions were made.

For two meetings, certain professionals' notes contained specifics that were never raised in the meetings with the young people and parents. For example, on the school summary a statement was made that the young person

would attend a particular course at Miller College. The social work department summary wrote that the young person would attend another course. Not only did these two professional records differ from each other, but neither of these two courses was ever mentioned, let alone described, to the young person or parent. Given that the meeting was a FNA1 meeting, the decision was unlikely to have been made with the young person (or parent) in pre-meeting interchanges with professionals.

In post-meeting questionnaires, participants were specifically asked if anybody was responsible to implement decisions. Participants regularly named different participants, or were not sure which participants were responsible. Take, for example, one FNA3 meeting where all participants thought decisions were made. These decisions included the psychologist liaising with a community leader over work experience, and a FE college link. Presumably, both these decisions would have required someone to act. Yet no one was consistently recorded as being responsible. The specialist careers officer, the psychologist and the teacher were recorded as responsible three, four and five times respectively, out of nine participants. The parent and young person said they had no idea who was responsible for the decisions.

Notably, only four times was a young person ever noted as responsible for a decision: once by a young person and three times by the social work department representative. (Parents were only noted as responsible three times, and never by themselves.) When directly asked in interviews, no professional was surprised by this trend. All associated the pattern with the lack of involvement of young people within the FNA process. Five professionals saw the trend as resulting from the still 'paternalistic' system: "*I suppose we are still in the spoon-feeding bit, aren't we?*" (Eddie).

Specific time-tables were not usually set out for decisions' implementation.

When directly questioned about the lack of consensus on recommendations, professionals raised two explanations. First, FNA1 meetings did not have a decision-making mandate and thus decisions understandably did not result from these meetings. Evidence somewhat contradicted this explanation. More professionals recorded that decisions were made at FNA1 meetings than the number of professionals who recorded that decisions were not made. Parents and young people were more consistent. They either stated that no decisions were made, or that they did not know what decisions were made. Indeed, not knowing what decisions were made, or statements that no

decisions were made, were found not only for FNA1 meetings but FNA2 and FNA3 meetings as well; confusion over decisions was not confined to FNA1 meetings' participants.

Second, two professionals noted that the FNA meetings were set within a bureaucracy. Professionals had established procedures to carry through, and to note all of them would be repetitive and redundant. On the other hand, did the young person and parent know those procedures? Without knowing who were the responsible people, to whom did the parent and young person direct questions in the future, about a decision? In one meeting, a parent did raise a past decision of a college link that did not appear to have taken place. The 'automatic' procedure appeared to have broken down (or at least had been misunderstood by the parent) in this case. Should everyone's supposed understanding of 'automatic' procedures be relied upon? Further, professionals explained that they were more likely to record what they were responsible for, and not to note procedures in which they had no role. With some decisions, such an explanation appeared valid. Section 13 referrals were more consistently written down by the social work department representative (when she attended the meetings) than by any other professional. On the other hand, the decision for a college link (i.e., the young people would attend FE college for a few days) was more likely to be written down by a doctor than the FE college representative.

Summary answer: Decisions were not consistently summarised at the end of the FNA meetings. Even when decisions were summarised, the people responsible for implementing the decisions, and time-tables for implementation were rarely set. No meeting minutes were required by the FNA process, to be distributed to all participants. After the meetings, participants did not consistently note the same decisions and many participants were confused over what decisions had been made and who was responsible for them.

Follow-Up from the Meetings

Half the meetings ended with a statement by the headteacher that the participants would meet again the next year to review decisions. Whether these meetings fulfilled this function was arguable, as past decisions were rarely explicitly raised. (See pages 172-173 for discussion)

No procedure was in place to follow young people once they left the educational system (neither leaving secondary school nor FE college). The FNA meeting participants thus did not know how effective and useful

particular decisions had been for particular people, nor how the young people as a group had benefited or not from the meetings.¹¹

Summary answer: The review meetings of Colburne Region's FNA process provided an opportunity for FNA participants to follow-up on decisions made at previous meetings. This opportunity was rarely taken advantage of by participants. How useful the process and decisions were to the young people after they left school was not systematically recorded and evaluated. The FNA meetings did not have a regular process by which to evaluate the meetings.

Comparisons between the EV and FNA Meetings

The EV and FNA meetings' structures addressed the 'transitional problem' in particular ways.

The EV meetings addressed the 'transitional problem' through assessment. This approach implied that if young people had the adequate information and suitable suggestions, they would be able to act and access post-school opportunities. Generally, the assessments and recommendations were praised by meeting participants as being accurate, sensitive and positive. Certain participants, however, criticised such an approach as inadequate. Most young people had been extensively assessed throughout their careers to date. Little of the information was thus new. Young people did not need suggestions, these participants said, but actual opportunities. Assessment was not enough, said these participants. Future action was required.

The FNA meetings promised both assessment and action. The particular approach—suggested by the meetings' introductions and signalled by the decisions—required professionals to ensure that young people had somewhere to go in the daytime after they left school. The operationalisation of the promises was problematic. Required assessments were not always carried out and disseminated. Professionals' reports at meetings were more up-dates than assessments of young people's abilities that might be of use for their futures. While the FNA meetings' formal structure promised assessment

¹¹Thomson and Ward (1993) recently completed a survey that tracked recorded young people after they left school. But because the documentation of FNA decisions differed in quality and quantity across Scotland's Regions, and decisions were often 'to stay at school', the data does not provide conclusive information about how useful the FNA meetings were to the young people. Certainly, if the young people wanted employment (and most of them did in this Scottish-Ontario research), the FNA meetings did not appear to improve their chances of obtaining it. (See page 34.)

and decisions at the FNA2 stage, in practice assessment and decisions were diffused across several meetings. The FNA process no longer matched most young people's extended stay within secondary school. Yet the decisions continued to be made over the same two options. Little intermediate action was planned: for example, work experience was not addressed for all young people, and discussion of educational plans within the school overtly dissuaded. Notably, when the young people actually were preparing to leave school, the FNA meetings mobilised to make concrete decisions (albeit on the same two options). Were all the previous FNA meetings—with their accompanying resource costs and young people's and parents' confusion—necessary to have effective FNA leavers' meetings?

Both the EV and FNA processes had the potential to conceptualise and to address the young people's transition broadly. Both meetings invited a range of people, who could each present different expertise and knowledge: the young people, a variety of professionals, and parents (in the EV meetings, when the young people were living in their parental homes). Professionals attended who could potentially assess post-school options stretching from recreational opportunities to housing to further education and/ or employment. Yet only the EV meetings fulfilled this potential to cover comprehensively a range of issues and options. FNA meetings concentrated on two options—staying at school or going to FE college—with scant mention of other opportunities. The breadth of discussion and decisions were limited, at least in part, because the FNA meetings were so short and key professionals failed to attend.

Both the EV and FNA meetings presented professionalised solutions. EV meetings' typically focused on professionals' assessments and resulting recommendations. EV team members carried out the assessments with the young people, EV team members analysed the assessments, and EV team members created the recommendations. Young people were the ones assessed—although they did suggest their particular interests and concerns—and were the recipients of the assessment results and the recommendations. Young people could decide whether or not to act on the recommendations in the future, but within the EV meetings they took on the role of information recipients. FNA meetings also presented a professionalised solution. The decisions suggested that the FNA solution was a 'planned and smooth transition' from one kind of service provision to another. Such a solution lay within professionals' remit, not young people's nor their parents'. Decisions

indicated no expectation that young people would participate in their implementation. If parents had other concerns beyond educational placement, these were typically side-lined within the meetings and did not result in decisions.

Young people did have opportunities to contribute to decisions/ recommendations: to raise issues for the decisions/ recommendations; to comment on the decisions/ recommendations; and, in the FNA meetings particularly, to participate in the decision-making. The young people, however, were notably absent from decision-/ recommendation-making in the meetings. Despite the examples of good practice, neither meeting type appeared to encourage young people's involvement substantially. Were young people sufficiently involved in deciding what transitional issues should be addressed? Were young people sufficiently involved in making and co-ordinating decisions/ recommendations?

The meetings' solutions were individualised. Both types of meetings stressed assessment: assessment not of the environment, nor of community opportunities, but of individual young people and their (dis)abilities. Similarly, recommendations/ decisions focused on individual young people. The meetings' assessments and recommendations/ decisions suggested that young people should change and adapt. Pressure was not put on the community to change, to provide more opportunities, nor to eradicate barriers.¹²

The statutory and bureaucratic requirements of the FNA meetings ensured that all young people with recorded special needs would receive the FNA process and that (some) action would result. But this very comprehensiveness diffused resources across many young people and was at least partially responsible for the short time-span of the meetings and thus the limited amount of discussion and decisions. The legal and bureaucratic requirement to make a particular decision about educational placement served as the extent, rather than the starting point, of decisions' scope. Brought together by bureaucratic and legal requirements, the FNA professionals represented a wide range of present and future service providers. Yet, at times, the disparate professionals displayed a lack of collaboration and co-operation with one another.

¹²One possible exception was Val Trudeau's meeting (see case study Chapter 9). Outwith the EV meetings themselves, the EV team members are becoming involved in a community pilot scheme that does address social barriers (conversatin with J. Latter).

The EV meetings provided a more intensive service to individual young people than the FNA meetings, at least partially because they had fewer clients asking for this service. The EV team members worked together regularly on the Young Adult and Adolescent Team, and demonstrated more collaborative working than FNA professionals. The EV meetings could not promise any action from government-funded nor government-run agencies beyond the EV team, because such community agency representatives did not attend the meetings.

The meetings showed a range of both good and bad practices, which suggest particular changes. For example, meetings could benefit from: systematically making, summarising and reviewing decisions/recommendations; writing comprehensive minutes; and ensuring that assignments were made of people responsible for implementation, and time-tables. Further research is required to trace what effect and usefulness the meetings had for the young people as individuals and as a group. (For further discussion, see pages 276-277.)

It should be re-emphasised that not only individual actions, but the structure of the FNAs, EVs, and other institutions and realities, contributed to some of situations criticised by both participants and myself. A number of professionals involved in the FNA and EV meetings worked extremely hard to create positive experiences for young people and parents. Two case studies of meetings where young people and parents expressed satisfaction, as did participating professionals, are reported in the following chapter. Nevertheless, certain actions of individuals and structural aspects of the meetings appeared problematic when the data were analysed and they are thus reported.

Table M: Some Comparisons between the EV and FNA Meetings—Making Recommendations/ Decisions

EV Meetings	FNA Meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Assessment’ model best described EV practice. • Lack of action and new information caused dissatisfaction amongst certain participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promise of both ‘assessment’ and ‘active’ models, in both meetings’ introductions and structure. • Meetings not always fulfil assessment requirements, and tended not to take full advantage of their decision-making potential.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EV team members, educational personnel and ESS nurses attended meetings. • Community agency representatives did not attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of educational, medical and social work personnel invited. • Employer representatives not invited. Educational psychologists, social work department representative and cases workers did not always attend.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad conceptualisation of transition, including housing, education, health, transport and employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow conceptualisation of transition, typically only making decisions on educational placement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people contributed ideas about their futures during assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people contributed ideas about their futures during meetings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion most often during team meetings, when young people and parents not present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion most often after young people stated their interests, during the meetings. Young people rarely participated in the discussion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations not systematically summarised during meetings. • People responsible for recommendations not systematically assigned. • Time-table for implementations not systematically assigned. • Young people most commonly identified as responsible for implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations not systematically summarised during meetings. • People responsible for recommendations not systematically assigned. • Time-table for implementations not systematically assigned. • Professionals most commonly identified as responsible for implementation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes written and sent to all participants. • Young people and parents could make appointments with team members to see assessment reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No minutes written for general distribution. • Young people and parents not sent professionals’ assessment reports.

CHAPTER NINE: FOUR CASE STUDIES

Previous chapters have dissected the Educational-Vocational (EV) and Future Needs Assessment (FNA) meetings and combined relevant portions to formulate or criticise an interpretation. Chapter Six considered what participants thought the meetings were for, suggesting that whether or not participants' expectations were met would affect their levels of satisfaction. Chapter Seven asked the question: how, and to what extent, were the young people involved in their meetings? Chapter Eight investigated how, and what types, of decisions/ recommendations were made at the meetings. This chapter aims to explore the material in a different way: by selecting four case studies for description and interpretation.

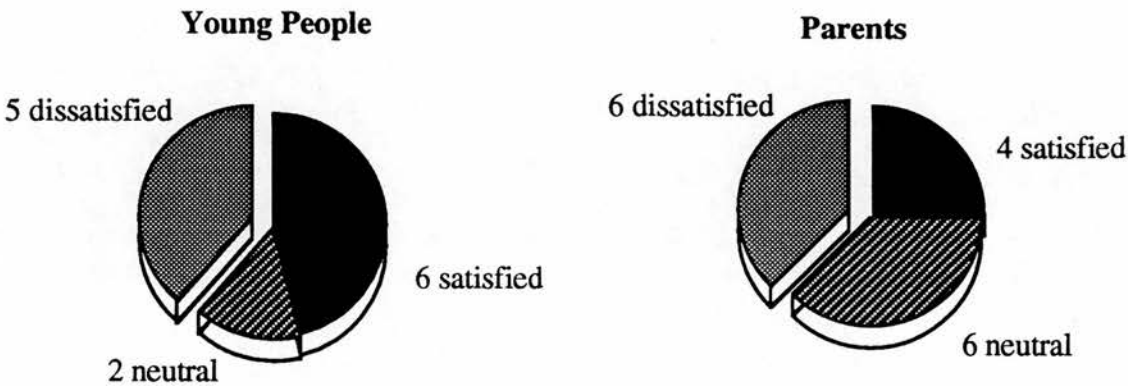
Through the case studies I hope to provide a sense of the whole process of the meetings, presenting an accumulation of events closer to that which participants actually experienced. Relationships can be drawn out between events within a meeting, either to reinforce or to question tentative conclusions made in previous chapters. The case studies can present a myriad of small details that show how such seemingly small actions can add up to significant differences in practice and policy.

The case studies will be primarily examined from the basis of participants' satisfaction. Such an examination brings the analysis full circle from the initial examination of how participants viewed the meetings' **purposes**, in Chapter Six. This chapter considers how participants viewed **what happened** at the meetings. The four case studies were thus selected on the basis of participant satisfaction. A FNA meeting, which resulted in high participant satisfaction, was chosen. An EV meeting was selected using the same criterion. Correspondingly, a FNA and an EV meeting were chosen where participants expressed dissatisfaction.

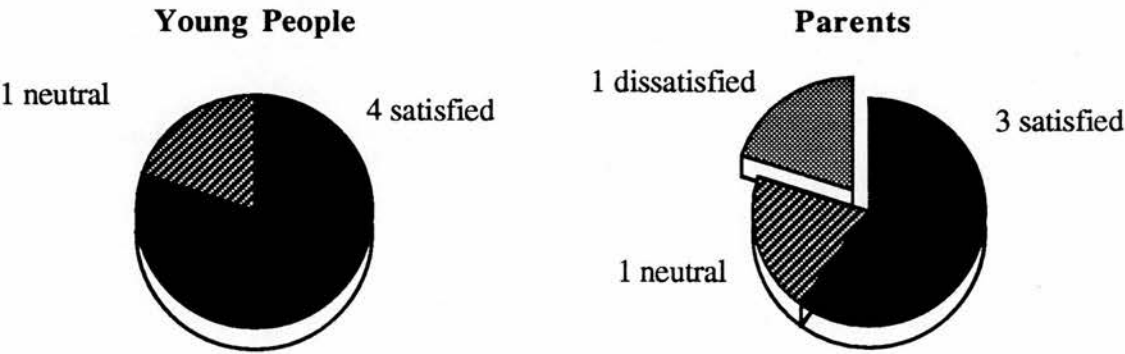
Judging Participant Satisfaction

After each meeting, every meeting participant was asked for her/ his overall opinion of that meeting. These answers were interpreted and divided into three categories: satisfied, neutral or dissatisfied (for details of each meeting, see Appendix F). To look at young people's and parents' opinions separately, consider Diagram K, next page.

Diagram K: Young People's and Parents' Overall Opinions of Their Meetings



FNA Meetings—Overall Satisfaction

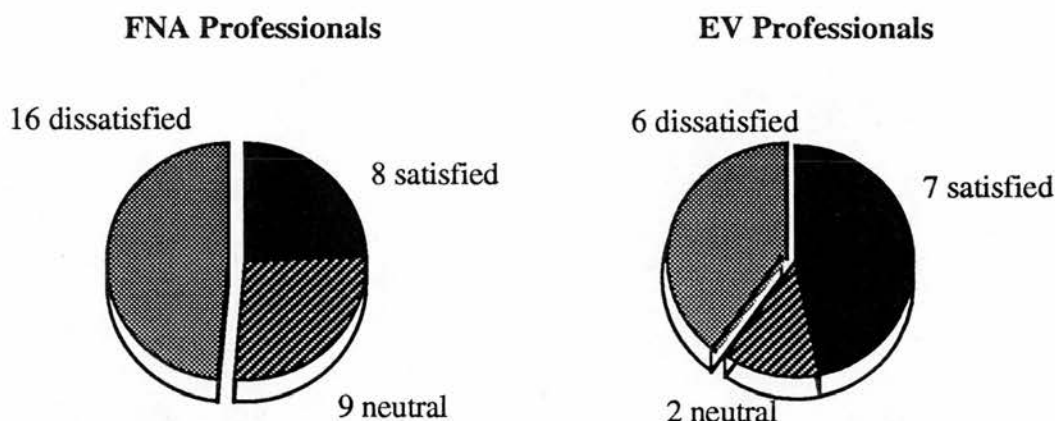


EV Meetings—Overall Satisfaction

Young people and parents were generally satisfied with their EV meetings. Young people and parents were less well satisfied with their FNA meetings. Young people were almost as likely to be dissatisfied, as to be satisfied, with their FNA meetings. More parents were dissatisfied with their FNA meetings than were satisfied.

Professionals did not always complete the corresponding section of their post-meeting questionnaires. Of the answers given, professionals' satisfaction could again be broken into three categories:

Diagram L: Professionals' Overall Opinions of Individual Meetings



EV professionals were slightly more likely to note satisfaction than dissatisfaction with the EV meetings. Within FNA meetings, twice as many professionals noted dissatisfaction as noted satisfaction. As with young people's and parents' opinions, EV professionals appeared more satisfied with the EV meetings than FNA professionals did of the FNA meetings.

Further, each participant was asked about her/ his (dis)satisfaction with decisions/ recommendations made at each meeting. Again, participants' answers were divided into the three categories of satisfied, neutral or dissatisfied (See Appendix F). With the EV meetings, only one young person's satisfaction differed between her overall evaluation of the meeting and of the recommendations made (starred on Table R, Appendix F). On the other hand, in the FNA meetings almost half of the young people and parents differed

between their overall evaluations of their meetings and of the decisions made (starred on Table Q, Appendix F). FNA young people and parents often expressed more satisfaction with the decisions made than they expressed satisfaction with their FNA meetings overall.

If anything, the tables and charts above reflect an over-balance on satisfaction. When participants said they were satisfied with that particular meeting and the decisions/ recommendations, then these statements were accepted even when some contradictory evidence could be found elsewhere within the post-meeting questionnaires.¹

Choice of Case Studies

Case studies of high satisfaction were simple to choose. Participants explicitly noted considerable satisfaction with Val Trudeau's EV meeting. No other EV meeting was evaluated so positively by participants. Similarly, Gillian Stone's and Mrs Stone's extreme satisfaction went beyond any other young person's or parent's. FNA professional participants also wrote positively about Gillian Stone's meeting in their post-meeting questionnaires.

Case studies of high dissatisfaction were harder to choose. One EV meeting did result in considerable participant dissatisfaction, but most of the pertinent details have been described elsewhere (see pages 136-138 148, and 161). Tom Shields' meeting resulted in the next least satisfaction and has been largely unexplored in previous chapters; thus, Tom Shields' meeting was selected. A variety of FNA meetings could have been selected, for four meetings received highly negative evaluations. Traci Miadich's meeting was chosen as both resulting in a high level of participant dissatisfaction, and as being relatively under-described in previous chapters.

The four meetings are outlined below. A brief overview concludes each case study. The chapter ends with an overall view of the four case studies.

¹The satisfaction levels may also be over-balanced for the EV meetings, since the team leader interviewed three young people and three parents (see pages 77-82 for discussion of interviews). Young people and parents may have been unwilling to express dissatisfaction to the person who had just chaired their meetings. Certainly, young people and parents tended to give short positive answers to the team leader concerning satisfaction. On the other hand, EV team members also noted some dissatisfaction with the meeting where the young person and parent expressed considerable dissatisfaction to me, in our interviews. Possibly, if a young person or parent was dissatisfied with a meeting, then one or more professionals would have noted dissatisfaction as well. No EV professional expressed dissatisfaction in their post-meeting questionnaires from those three EV meetings. Potentially, then, the three young people and their parents expressed their 'true' evaluations to the team leader.

There, particular issues raised in other chapters are re-considered in relation to the case studies.

The Educational-Vocational (EV) Meetings

1) Val Trudeau

When I first met her, Val Trudeau was feeling very depressed about her schooling—scoring low academically, feeling spotlighted within the school due to her disability, and dissatisfied with the school personnel's accommodation of her needs—and was considering leaving school completely. She told me that she dreaded the meeting; she feared yet another disastrous, negative experience with the school personnel reporting on her failures. The EV team members were aware of Val Trudeau's feelings, both about school generally and the meeting with the school personnel, and her concerns were subjects of discussion within the team meeting.

- ***The team meeting***

While the school personnel had apparently been invited, they had not arrived on time for the team meeting. All the EV team members who had assessed Val Trudeau, however, were able to attend: the recreationist, the physiotherapist, the occupational therapist, the team leader, the dietician, the vocational liaison officer, the social worker and the clinical psychologist.

The team meeting began without introduction with the physiotherapist, Karen, quickly launching into her report. Karen darted through the various technical findings—posture, upper extremity muscle strength, endurance—using some jargon (for example, the team leader requested Karen to spell out a particular word for the minutes) but avoiding the amount of jargon and technical detail to be found in her written report. Karen informed the group that she had written Val Trudeau an exercise programme, and she encouraged Val Trudeau to continue her physical activities.

The team leader then invited Joan, the recreationist, to give her report. Joan covered Val Trudeau's desire to leave school, transportation issues, Val Trudeau's self-perceived physical limitations, and Val Trudeau's present physical activities and hobbies. Joan suggested a particular centre where Val Trudeau could follow up one of her hobbies, complete with address and cost.

Joan had also told Val Trudeau that Joan would pair her with another person who had a similar disability, so that they could do some physical activity together. Having already asked this other person, Joan would pass on the name and telephone number to Val Trudeau.

After Joan completed her report, the occupational therapist Marie presented her findings. She reviewed what had been tested—strength and range of motion in Val Trudeau’s limbs and hands, how Val Trudeau dealt with tasks of daily living (such as transfers) and clerical/ manual tasks—and emphasised Val Trudeau’s determination and assertiveness during the assessment. Marie did not use the technical terms included in her report (for example “*bilateral extension and abduction*”). Marie recommended particular aids to help Val Trudeau with daily living. Marie also suggested that Val Trudeau should slow down to ensure more accuracy when working, and recommended manual work with fine tools for Val Trudeau’s future employment. Marie contrasted the findings with what information had been given from school, “*that she had difficulty*”, and questioned the school’s interpretation of Val Trudeau’s abilities.

Kim (the social worker) suggested that Val Trudeau might not be motivated within school; Rachel (the psychologist) quickly agreed that Val Trudeau was bored. After Val Trudeau’s motivation was briefly discussed, Sharon (the vocational liaison officer) asked if Val Trudeau experienced any pain in repetitive tasks. Marie reported that Val Trudeau had experienced no trouble over the three hours of manual testing. Sharon’s murmurs sounded surprised. Indeed, Sharon had recorded in her written report Val Trudeau’s comments that she found the manual effort for writing examinations excessive.

The team leader then directed Ruth to give the dietary report. Val Trudeau’s weight, diet, and fibre intake were described briefly. Ruth already had suggested snack ideas, high fibre, and high calorie and protein beverages during Val Trudeau’s assessment. Ruth reported that Val Trudeau appeared “*quite interested in it all*” and was motivated to carry out the recommendations.

After a brief silence following Ruth’s report, the team leader invited Kim to give her social work report. Kim described her impression of Val Trudeau. She raised Val Trudeau’s unhappiness with her school that did not “*seem to accommodate her special needs*”. Val Trudeau had not wanted Kim to contact the school over such matters, and Kim reported that Val Trudeau

appeared to have given up any idea that the school could change. Kim thought that Val Trudeau was not doing particularly well academically in school.

The team leader inserted information about Val Trudeau's grade level. He suggested that Val Trudeau might do better by combining academics with a co-op situation (where a student works—usually for wages—and usually gains school credits for this experience) and noted that Sharon would raise such suggestions in her report. Kim mentioned that Val Trudeau also felt she should move to such a combination, and Mark praised Val Trudeau for having such insight.

Kim continued, stating her impression that Val Trudeau was isolated at home. Kim spoke of Val Trudeau's hobbies, her lack of interest presently about boyfriends and marriage, and her wish to live independently in the future. Kim described good family relationships and Val Trudeau's preference to live in a small town. Kim concluded that she saw no need for social work involvement. If Val Trudeau wished to live in Sheldon, Kim offered her services to help explore different housing options. Kim suggested that the team contact the school, with Val Trudeau's consent, to see if changes could be made. Kim ended by emphasising the advantage for Val Trudeau of obtaining her Grade Twelve diploma², for future vocational options.

Mark briefly wondered where the school personnel were. Sharon said that, indeed, the school personnel were expected. Kim introduced another topic immediately: whether Val Trudeau would fit the medical criteria for a particular disability benefit. Mark thought that Val Trudeau might as well apply. Kim said she would recommend that Val Trudeau apply for the benefit, and would give Val Trudeau the benefit information.

Again after a brief silence, Rachel the psychologist began her report. Rachel talked largely without interruption, beyond other team members' exclamations at some of the positive findings in her report. She reviewed the test findings in terms of non-verbal reading skills, work skills, reading levels, memory, word problems, and verbal and visual information. Rachel spoke of what the tests measured, and did not use the formal test names used within her written report. Rachel emphasised Val Trudeau's positive work habits: a good

²An educational certificate given to students when they achieve the required number of credits. Credits are given for successfully completing modules or classes. Generally, people take four years to gather enough credits for this diploma, during their time in high schools.

sense of humour, consistent effort, and perseverance over difficult tasks. Rachel mentioned Val Trudeau's interests from vocational testing and found that Val Trudeau's aptitudes and interests were *"really a good blend"*. Rachel concluded her report by supporting Val Trudeau's sessions with the school psychologist, which were helping Val Trudeau with her self-esteem and frustration.

Sharon (the vocational liaison officer) asked Rachel if Val Trudeau should complete her Grade Twelve, in a different, more appropriate programme. Rachel felt that Val Trudeau certainly should, and her strengths in school should be emphasised as that *"extra carrot"*. Sharon talked of how Val Trudeau did want to leave school. She reported how she was teased: *"She's sort of being abused in that sense by her peers."* Sharon then suggested and described a possible alternative educational programme. Sharon reported that when she had mentioned this programme to Val Trudeau, *"she was just so excited ... she was really very positive about it."* But, Sharon said, the problem might be persuading the school to accept this transfer. The transfer would have to be approved by the guidance counsellor and the school director.

If Val Trudeau were able to obtain her Grade Twelve diploma, then *"the sky's the limit,"* explained Sharon. Two programmes would then be available to Val Trudeau to train in manual vocations. Kim inserted her support at several points within Sharon's description of these programmes. Mark concluded the description: *"We need to support her getting her Grade Twelve,"* and said that Val Trudeau's strengths had to be recognised. Kim, Mark, Sharon and Rachel continued to expand on the value of the suggested educational programme and the need for Val Trudeau to continue her education.

Mark asked, *"The question is, why didn't they switch before?"* to the alternative educational programme. Rachel wondered if maybe the school had not known Val Trudeau's strengths. Mark exclaimed:

But that reinforces my whole concern about why programmes like ours and people like us have to be around because I don't think the boards or the schools have the tools to do this sort of assessment.

Sharon emphatically followed Mark's comment by stating how clearly unhappy Val Trudeau was. Team members then took turns exclaiming how Val Trudeau's strengths had gone unrecognised and how low her self-esteem was presently.

Sharon changed the track of the discussion by emphasising that, if Val Trudeau changed to the programme, she should continue seeing the school psychologist as Val Trudeau found the sessions invaluable. Rachel agreed. At this point, Mark queried the group if they were ready for the next part of the meeting. Val Trudeau, Mrs Trudeau and the school personnel (Norman the school psychologist and Harriet a school teacher) were ushered into the room.

- ***The full meeting***

Kim, the social worker, introduced herself. Each meeting participant then identified him- or herself by name and role (including Val Trudeau and Mrs Trudeau). The team leader Mark then formally introduced the meeting:

Val, as I mentioned before, we're going to have a team discussion and I'll make some suggestions to you um, about ideas for the future, let you know where some of your strengths are. And you have lots of strengths. Sometimes I know you don't feel like you do, you have some of those things, and you'll hear from the different team members that you do have lots of good strengths. Some really positive things that you can look forward to using, down the road.

Mark clearly directed the introduction to Val Trudeau by beginning with her name. Mark reminded Val Trudeau that Val Trudeau already knew what was to happen at the meeting: a discussion involving the team (did the team include Val Trudeau, Mrs Trudeau and/ or the school personnel?) and Mark would make some suggestions to Val Trudeau about her future. Val Trudeau's strengths were emphasised in four different statements, taking up the bulk of the introduction. In her post-meeting interview, Mrs Trudeau expressed her satisfaction that the assessments had emphasised her daughter's strengths. Even a report of weaknesses, Mrs Trudeau said, "... can still be positive ... It's the way you say it."

Mark then invited participants to speak in French, as Val Trudeau was more comfortable speaking in that language³. (Notably, minutes sent out to Val Trudeau after the meeting were written in English. If Val Trudeau could best understand written French, she might have found the written material inaccessible.)

³The French tape-recording, the transcript of this recording and an English translation were all used for analysis of this portion of Val Trudeau's meeting. For the sake of understanding for English-only readers, the English translation will be used. While certain EV team members were more fluent in French than others, no differences in translation seemed insightful for the purposes of this case study.

Karen began her physiotherapy report. Karen talked directly to Val Trudeau. She avoided any technical terms (including the word spelled out in the team meeting), covering endurance, physical activities, and strength. At each new topic, she introduced her findings based on what, "*we discussed*". Karen encouraged Val Trudeau to continue her physical activities. Karen reminded Val Trudeau of the exercise programme they had constructed together, and gave a written copy of it to Val Trudeau. She pointed out that her name and number were at the bottom of the copy if Val Trudeau had any questions. She emphasised that Val Trudeau should not hesitate to contact her.

After a brief silence at the end of Karen's uninterrupted report, Joan launched into her recreational report. Joan introduced each point in terms of what "*we talked*" about in the past assessment interview. She consistently directed her report to Val Trudeau. Joan covered the same topics with the same details, as she had reported in the previous team meeting. Again, Joan's report was made without interruption. At the end, Joan asked if Val Trudeau had any questions. Val Trudeau nodded 'no'.

Marie began her occupational therapy report. Marie talked directly to Val Trudeau. Marie reviewed the tests' findings—strengths, daily living tasks, co-ordination—and talked predominantly of Val Trudeau's abilities. Only Val Trudeau's difficulty in holding an apparatus, and a suggestion that she work more slowly, could be interpreted as being slightly less positive. All other comments emphasised Val Trudeau's capabilities and positive attitude. Marie recommended two practical aids for daily living (available from her department) and manual work with tools. Marie said that Val Trudeau did not require much work supervision as she was self-motivated and able to concentrate. Marie, like Joan, concluded her report by asking Val Trudeau if she had any questions. After a silence, Ruth began her report.

Ruth the dietician said that she would speak in English. Talking to Val Trudeau, Ruth said that everything she was now going to say they had already discussed in their assessment interview. Ruth reiterated her report from the team meeting. At the end, Ruth reminded Val Trudeau that they had gone over suggestions for lunches and snack ideas. Ruth asked Val Trudeau if she had done anything about these suggestions. Val Trudeau replied that she had tried but that she did not find it easy. Ruth agreed with a laugh, and said she would provide her name and telephone number to Val Trudeau for future reference.

Kim immediately gave her social work report, speaking in French. She began with Val Trudeau's name, thus clearly directing her report to Val Trudeau. She reminded Val Trudeau that she had met her and her mother, to discuss accommodation and financial issues. Kim emphasised that it was "*very important*" that Val Trudeau should finish her Grade Twelve for future options. Kim suggested a particular financial benefit for Val Trudeau. The benefit would provide a "*bit of pocket money*" and, thus, a "*bit more independence*". Kim asked if Val Trudeau would like to receive information about this benefit; Val Trudeau nodded her agreement. Kim concluded her report by offering to explore accommodation options in the future, should Val Trudeau move to Sheldon. She invited Val Trudeau to telephone Kim if Val Trudeau had any questions. (Kim's report here was shorter than the one provided in the team meeting, as it did not describe Kim's impression of Val Trudeau nor Val Trudeau's social isolation at home. This information was covered in Kim's written report, along with considerably more detail about Val Trudeau's family background and independence in the home.)

After Kim's uninterrupted report, Rachel gave the psychological report. Rachel talked to Val Trudeau, beginning her report with Val Trudeau's strength in visual testing. She then sketched the comparatively more difficult tests for Val Trudeau, in language and mathematics, and returned to Val Trudeau's strengths in visual tasks. Rachel spoke of Val Trudeau's vocational preferences, which matched Val Trudeau's aptitudes. She recommended that Val Trudeau work with tools and suggested particular occupations that would fit that kind of work. Rachel concluded her report by emphasising Val Trudeau's positive work characteristics and how Rachel and Val Trudeau had talked about the importance of continuing school. Rachel's report was again uninterrupted, except when French terms were provided when Rachel was unsure of the correct phrases.

Sharon began her vocational report. She spoke positively of Val Trudeau's future:

*I think what we mean here is that there are **enormous** possibilities for you as long as we direct them in an appropriate way and then we ... try to maximise let's say the the abilities that you have.*

Sharon suggested some possible careers: graphics and computer work. Sharon said the strongest point that had come from the meeting between her and Val Trudeau was Val Trudeau's desire to leave school. Sharon suggested that the "*time had come to look at other options*" and suggested perhaps another

milieu. She then mentioned the alternative educational programme. The school teacher, Harriet, provided the formal name of the programme and the name of the person who ran it. Sharon continued to describe the programme from the basis of the programme organiser's outline. Harriet mid-way interjected, *"I'm not sure that,"* but Sharon did not stop. Sharon continued to describe work experience opportunities for Val Trudeau, including one programme mentioned in her previous report in the team meeting (the second programme was not raised here, nor in Sharon's written report nor minutes from the meeting) and another programme named for the first time (this programme's name was also not written in the meeting's minutes nor Sharon's written report). Sharon ended her report by indicating that she wished to know the school's response to the suggested educational programme, as the school's approval would be required.

Harriet, the school teacher, began to talk immediately, overlapping Sharon's last words. Harriet did not think the suggested programme would *"respond to Val Trudeau's needs"*. Harriet appealed to Norman, the school psychologist, if he would *"help me there, but with the comments I got from the teachers [on the programme] ..."* Harriet did not complete the idea.

Val Trudeau asked what a particular aspect of the programme was. Harriet explained and then raised what perhaps she was hinting at before:

These programmes are reserved for the pupils who can't live in a group, who don't succeed in groups. Who drop out, the drop-outs.

After this comment, Harriet and Mrs Trudeau became involved in a tense interchange about what the school had offered Val Trudeau. They overlapped each other when speaking—Mrs Trudeau querying what the school had done and Harriet emphasising what the school had tried to do. Sharon intervened, by redirecting the conversation to focus on the suggested educational programme. Sharon emphasised the positive aspects of the programme: students had decided to continue with school rather than leave. Harriet again stated her worry and indicated her surprise that Val Trudeau was not happy with her present placement. Mrs Trudeau began to talk of how change was necessary and this time Rachel, the team psychologist, re-directed the conversation.

Rachel emphasised that Val Trudeau's abilities were not being highlighted within her present schooling, but rather areas were emphasised in which Val Trudeau had less skill. Harriet interjected that Val Trudeau would

have to cover some of these more difficult areas to gain her diploma. Norman, the school psychologist, then intervened. His tone sounded excited, and he spoke uninterrupted for a considerable time. Norman directed his comments to Harriet, suggesting that the school should try to understand better what Val Trudeau needed and try to create a school curriculum that better matched Val Trudeau's abilities. Norman talked very quickly, accelerating as he spoke.

Harriet said that Val Trudeau's present programme already offered work experience. Harriet again voiced her concern about the suggested educational programme, calling on her *"twenty-two years of experience that I've had in education"* to support her opinion.

Joan, the recreationist, interrupted Harriet at that point. Joan talked of Val Trudeau's lack of motivation in her present programme, and the suggested educational programme's emphasis on work experience. Harriet turned to Val Trudeau and said that she could have work experience that year, but Val Trudeau had not mentioned that she was interested. Val Trudeau replied that the previous year she had been refused and thought that this year she would be turned down again. Harriet said that, since Grade Eleven, Val Trudeau had been directed to the work experience.

Again, Norman the school psychologist altered the conversation's direction by asking Harriet if the school curriculum could not change. Harriet replied that students on the suggested educational programme were often *"into drugs"*, the regular school programme could offer work experience, and links could be considered with a technical school. Both Val Trudeau and Mrs Trudeau interrupted Harriet to protest at Harriet's description of people taking drugs only on the suggested educational programme. Harriet then emphasised that the people on the programme lacked motivation.

Rachel overlapped Harriet's comments, directing a question to Val Trudeau. Would Val Trudeau prefer to attend the neighbouring technical school? Val Trudeau said that she would not because she doubted her intellectual abilities. Rachel launched into a brief but strong defence of Val Trudeau's abilities, based on the assessment findings. Sharon immediately followed Rachel's defence by restating Val Trudeau's clear wish for another school context. Harriet then asked Norman what he thought.

Norman spoke uninterrupted for over two minutes. He reported that the technical school had previously been considered, and that Val Trudeau had decided she did not want to attend it. Norman spoke of Val Trudeau's success within her present programme. He suggested that the school should

be an “innovator” with Val Trudeau’s contribution, and requested someone from the EV team to summarise the situation precisely. He recognised Harriet’s concern that the students on the suggested educational programme might be less interested in school. Val Trudeau would have to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of all options and decide for herself. Norman spoke of Val Trudeau’s understandable frustration and anger “*at the world*”.

When Norman finished talking, Harriet also spoke of Val Trudeau having to decide which programme she wanted. Discussion then ensued about the characteristics of various programmes, and aspects Val Trudeau would have to consider.

Mark intervened, directing the meeting to consider the process by which options would be considered. He suggested that a review meeting (an Identification and Placement Review Committee (IPRC)) would have to be held. He asked what was going to happen at this point. Discussion continued, without specifying exact plans. Mark again intervened, this time to set out an outline of future plans: Val Trudeau would have to visit some of the educational options and make her decision; a specific date would have to be set for the IPRC meeting; and that the EV team would check with the school by a particular date about how these recommendations were proceeding. Mark asked if these recommendations were reasonable; Harriet replied that the date was earlier than the IPRC meetings were scheduled to be held. Mark asked if a review meeting could be held earlier. Harriet agreed that it could be.

Mark’s outline was also set out, in two places, within the meeting’s minutes. The minutes were specific as to timing, action and follow-up. Given the later concentration of the meeting on Val Trudeau’s education and vocational abilities, meeting participants unsurprisingly often noted recommendations concerning vocational choices and school placement. Other recommendations—from the recreationist, the physiotherapist, and the occupational therapist—were seldom mentioned in the post-meeting questionnaires.

Val Trudeau’s responsibility for the recommendations was noted by participants, including herself. School personnel were also overwhelmingly noted as responsible. Other EV team members were more erratically noted. Two EV team members did not note themselves as responsible while other participants noted that they were. Participants widely expressed their satisfaction with the recommendations. Reasons given were the consensus on assessment findings, and the concrete focus on Val Trudeau’s “*needs*”.

At the end of the meeting, Mark asked Val Trudeau if she had any questions. She did not have any. Mark asked if anybody else had any questions. Again, Mark's query was met with silence. Mark then concluded the meeting by thanking people for attending.

- **Overview**

In part, the preceding team meeting allowed EV team members to co-ordinate their reports (team members checking findings and requesting information from one another) and collaborate on their approach for the following full meeting. Much of the information was repeated from EV team members' reports from meeting to meeting—taking up at least 30 minutes of each meeting—but changes due to the co-ordination and collaboration were included. (Two EV team members' written reports, however, did not reflect these changes. The dates on these reports showed that they were typed before the meeting.) The approach decided upon within the team meeting was clearly followed in the full meeting: to emphasise Val Trudeau's abilities and to push the school personnel to approve of educational change.

Mark began the full meeting with a firm emphasis on Val Trudeau's considerable strengths, and the occupational therapist, the psychologist and the vocational liaison officer continued this pattern in their reports. When Val Trudeau questioned her abilities amongst the tense discussion of her future education, Rachel strongly re-stated the psychological test findings that *"nothing was wrong with her brain"* and that she did have significant strengths. Both Val Trudeau and Mrs Trudeau stated their satisfaction with the meeting's positive assessments, in post-meeting interviews.

The majority of EV team members strongly and explicitly aligned themselves with Val Trudeau's desire to change her educational programme (EV team members who did not participate—the physiotherapist and the dietician—arguably had little professional basis on which to support educational recommendations). In combination with reports of Val Trudeau's own statements, the EV professionals supported Val Trudeau's wishes with test findings of her motivation, her abilities and the present emphasis on areas in which she had fewer abilities. Mrs Trudeau spoke of Val Trudeau's dissatisfaction with her present schooling. In chorus with other participants, Val Trudeau also put forward her own viewpoint and dissatisfaction with her schooling. The EV team members and Mrs Trudeau thus acted as Val

Trudeau's advocates within the meeting, pressuring the school personnel to consider change.

Sharon recognised in the team meeting that the school personnel might not be open to change, and certainly Harriet the school teacher appeared averse to Val Trudeau transferring to the suggested educational programme. Harriet protested in various ways—the school had attempted to meet Val Trudeau's needs, Val Trudeau had failed to take up the school's efforts, the programme catered for "*drop-outs*" (people who leave school before graduating) and people who took drugs, and her own opinion based on "*twenty-two years of education experience*"—which were all countered by other meeting participants. Other meeting participants appeared to react to Harriet's protests as obstacles to counter rather than issues to consider. (It was possible that Harriet's comments were based on information not known to other meeting participants.) When the conversation appeared to become accusatory, an EV team member or the school psychologist typically re-directed discussion to what could be done. At the end, Harriet appeared to hand the responsibility for the decision over to Norman, the school psychologist. Norman then continued to talk extensively about Val Trudeau's progress to date (thus recognising Harriet's and others' efforts) and advocated that change be made. Mark concluded the meeting with a concrete outline of the proceeding process by which educational changes should be made (complete with responsibilities, timetables, and follow-up procedures). The outline was repeated in the meeting's minutes in two places. Val Trudeau's desire to alter her education appeared to be accepted and a process to change it put into motion.

Both Val Trudeau and Mrs Trudeau felt that their views and wishes had been heard within the meeting, and expressed considerable satisfaction with the assessment findings and the recommendations. In her post-meeting interview, Val Trudeau said that she felt "*well represented*" within the meeting. The recommendation for educational change was widely recognised by participants, as was Val Trudeau's and the school's responsibility for change. Val Trudeau appeared to be delighted with her part in the future educational decision. To the interview question about who was responsible for implementing the recommendations, Val Trudeau identified herself and said with a laugh, "*Can't do it without me.*"

The team members used several different methods to include and make Val Trudeau comfortable. The meeting was predominantly held in French,

which was the language Val Trudeau felt most at ease speaking and listening to (although written minutes were English). Team members' verbal reports were addressed to Val Trudeau, and typically based on her own views or abilities. Val Trudeau was offered an opportunity to question EV team members' reports and recommendations after every report. While Val Trudeau did not talk often within the meeting, she did offer more self-initiated comments and longer answers than any other young person in the EV meetings observed. Overall, the meeting participants appeared to make Val Trudeau comfortable. Certainly both she and her mother felt satisfied with the meetings' information and acceptance of their wishes.

2) Tom Shields

Phrases such as "*a pleasant and sociable young man*" were repeated throughout EV team members' descriptions of Tom Shields. In our pre-meeting interview, Tom Shields said he very much enjoyed meeting people and hoped that his future employment might capitalise on his socialising abilities. Tom Shields had worked in various job placements, and felt that secretarial work best suited his abilities. Tom Shields was concerned about his work chances in the present recession; he hoped that, through perseverance, he would eventually be able to find some satisfactory job.

In our pre-meeting interview, Tom Shields explained that he expected little from the EV meeting. He went through the EV assessment because he had been referred by his school staff. Tom Shields was already quite sure about his interest in secretarial work and had heard from past EV clients that substantial new information and radical recommendations were rarely made. Tom Shields had been warned by fellow students that he might be asked unnecessary personal questions; therefore, he was pleasantly surprised by the appropriateness of questions asked during his EV assessment. Perhaps, Tom Shields wondered, he would also be pleasantly surprised by new information and useful recommendations from the meeting?

- *The team meeting*

The team meeting started 35 minutes late, as the waiting professionals⁴ were unaware that the physiotherapist and psychologist were not able to

⁴Professionals attending the team meeting were: two school personnel; the team leader; the occupational therapist; the recreationist; the social worker; and the vocational liaison officer.

attend. Time was then taken up waiting for the physiotherapist's report to arrive. The team leader thus began the team meeting with an encouragement for efficiency, as Tom Shields and Mrs Shields had already arrived for the following meeting. The team leader invited Marie to give her occupational therapy report.

Marie sketched the test results of Tom Shields' physical capacities: strength, range of motion, co-ordination etc. She used technical terms, such as "*prehension*", which were also noted in her written report. Not all meeting participants were familiar with this terminology. When Marie suggested that Tom Shields be encouraged to use his "*right upper extremity*", Sue the school teacher asked whether Marie was referring to Tom Shields' right arm.

Marie continued describing Tom Shields' sitting posture and work abilities. Marie highlighted Tom Shields' positive approach to his work. Identifying several "*difficulties*" and "*problems*" Tom Shields had with carrying out tasks, Marie wondered if Tom Shields' eyesight might be contributing to these difficulties and problems. Sharon informed Marie that Tom Shields had just had his eyes tested, and no lack of vision had been detected. Marie continued to wonder if Tom Shields might have some eyesight difficulty, and Mark closed the topic by suggesting that Tom Shields should be asked about when he had last been tested.

Marie again asserted Tom Shields' positive approach to work, giving examples within the occupational testing that highlighted various positive characteristics. Marie ended her report with four recommendations: to encourage Tom Shields to maintain a good seating posture; to have his eyes tested; to practice aligning numbers for adding and subtracting; and to avoid tasks where speed was important.

Sue (the teacher) questioned Marie's mathematics recommendation: at the school Tom Shields would use a calculator as neither perception nor mathematical concepts were Tom Shields' strengths. Marie explained the difficulty Tom Shields had on the occupational therapy tests. After a silence, the team leader invited Joan to present her recreational report. Sue interrupted Joan, this time overtly disagreeing with the recommendation to practise aligning numbers. Very quietly, the team leader explained that he had written down the recommendation to use a calculator. Indeed, in the meeting's minutes, the calculator recommendation was recorded. No note, however, was apparent for Marie's written report of the changed recommendation. Marie's

written report would presumably remain on file and might be accessed by the Shields at a latter date.

Once started again, Joan gave an uninterrupted report based on what Tom Shields had told her in the assessment interview. Tom Shields had stated his desire to attend a local college, although in what area he was apparently unsure. Joan listed Tom Shields' various work experience placements, and various physical and social activities. Based on his expressed interests, Joan had gathered information about swimming, summer camp, and pottery classes (including centres' names, addresses and telephone numbers) to be given to Tom Shields at the following meeting.

After a brief silence, Kim began her social work report. Tom Shields had greatly impressed Kim with his 'presentation': polite, well-groomed and responsible. Kim spoke of Tom Shields' interest in secretarial work and his self-assessment of his work abilities. Kim addressed Tom Shields' positive relationship with his family, and his parents' employment and financial situation. While Tom Shields and his parents had told Kim they were satisfied with Tom Shields living at home, Tom Shields had indicated an interest of moving out in the future. Kim had thus gathered information about local housing and home care arrangements, for Tom Shields to explore in the future.

Sue, the school teacher, asked Kim if Tom Shields had displayed any anxiety in Kim's interview with him. Kim quietly replied that he had not "*presented in that way*". Sue spoke of Tom Shields' underlying anxiety, which he generally covered when talking to other people. Sue wondered if the psychological report would have discovered anything about Tom Shields' feelings (the psychologist was not present to respond). No one addressed Sue's concern at this point.

Mark, the team leader, presented the physiotherapist's report (the physiotherapist being absent). Mark was extremely brief: he named Tom Shields' medical diagnosis and said, "*The bottom line is is that there is no recommendation.*" Noelle, one of the school personnel, asked if a particular walking aid had not been evaluated. Mark read directly from the written physiotherapist report that different walking aids had been tried, but that Tom Shields had not found any of the alternatives more useful than his present aid. Kim then asked Marie if Tom Shields needed help in transferring in and out of the bathtub. Marie informed Kim that Tom Shields was independent. Kim wondered if bathtub transfers might be an issue in future housing, should a bathtub lift not be available. Marie agreed that, without a lift, Tom Shields

might well need assistance. Kim stated that such a need would make Tom Shields eligible for supported housing. Marie asserted that Tom Shields was presently managing well.

Mark interrupted Marie with a query to Sharon, said with a laugh: "*So did you find him a job?*" Sharon, the vocational liaison officer, responded with her report. Sharon confirmed other team members' support of Tom Shield's self-knowledge. Sharon raised other interests of which Tom Shields had told her, including crafts, woodwork and wheelchair maintenance. Referring to Joan's and Kim's comments about Tom Shields attending the local college, Sharon said that Tom Shields had not spoken of college to her. Sharon referred to Sue's comments about Tom Shields' (possible) lack of confidence, and spoke of how he had turned this insecurity to "*serve him well*" in perseverance and effort. Tom Shields had suggested an employment assessment, where he would be employed on a trial basis. Tom Shields felt that he could then prove his abilities to combat employers' potentially discriminatory attitudes. Sharon suggested that Tom Shields be referred to the Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS), who would organise and fund such employer assessment places, that April or May. Sue questioned Sharon's timing, and Sharon clarified that she meant to refer Tom Shields that year, thus leaving Tom Shields a year and a half to rise through VRS' lengthy waiting list.

Mark asked Sharon if "*gainful employment*" and "*financial independence*" were "*realistic*" for Tom Shields, even with an employer assessment. Sharon was not sure, but told Mark that Tom Shields himself had raised the potential difficulty of living without his disability pension. Tom Shields did not plan to give up his pension until he had steady employment. Mark commented on Tom Shields' unusual insight "*for our group*" about employment realities. Sharon and Kim then exclaimed about Tom Shields' interpersonal skills. Sue interrupted: while Sue did not want to "*throw on cold water*", Tom Shields' talking did need to be "*channelled*" in a training situation for Tom Shields was known to talk "*too much*".

After some laughter from the group, Joan asked about college for Tom Shields. Sue voiced her own disdain for the local college. Mark suggested that the employer assessment might be a more "*practical approach*" than college, based on what had been discussed so far. Kim, Sue and Noelle reviewed Tom Shields' work and educational experience to support Mark's suggestion. Sharon asked Marie if Tom Shields could change easily from one task to

another; Marie replied that he was better at doing one task at a time. Mark asked Sharon, with a laugh: "*You may have an opening in your office?*"

After some laughter, Mark concluded the team meeting, by asking if anybody had any more questions or comments. No one responded, and Mark went to meet Tom Shields and Mrs Shields waiting in the reception room, to invite them into the full meeting.

- ***The full meeting***

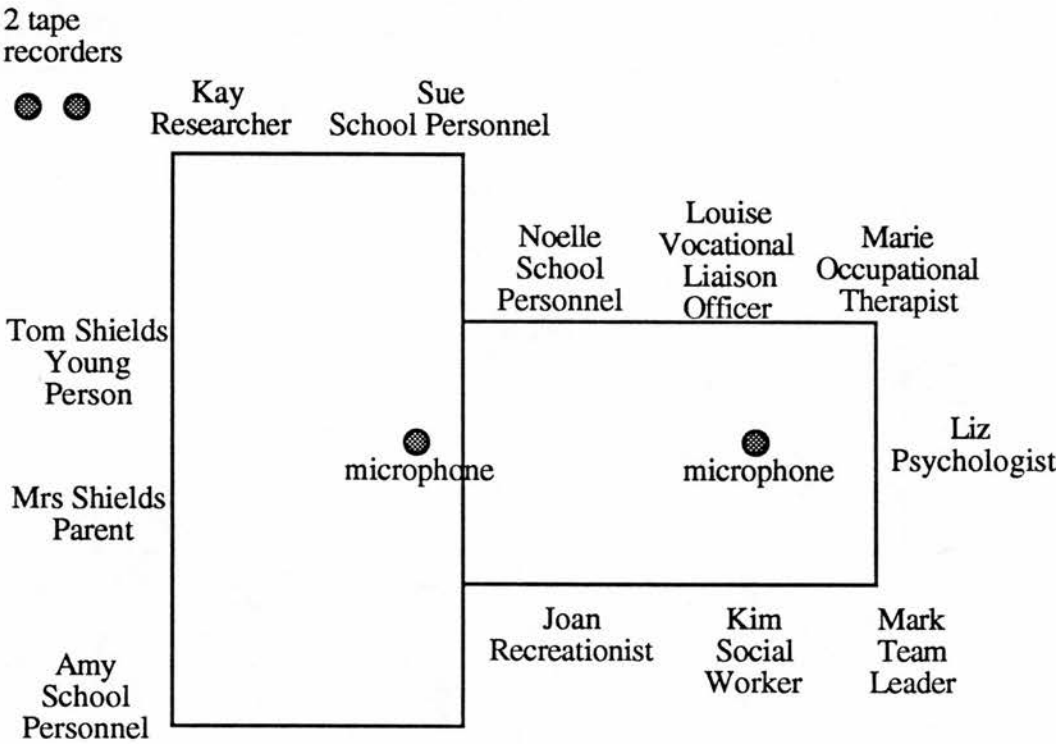
The remaining meeting participants chatted informally for several minutes. Sue could be heard above the burble, talking to Joan about her concern with Tom Shields' underlying anxiety. Joan assured Sue that the psychologist would be attending the second part of the meeting. Indeed, the psychologist soon entered the room and took a seat. Amy, another member of the school staff, also arrived.

Shortly after, Tom Shields, Mrs Shields and Mark entered the room. Joan moved out a chair so that Tom Shields could sit himself easily (see Diagram M, next page, for seating arrangements). A general chorus of 'hellos' came from various seated participants, directed towards both Tom Shields and Mrs Shields. They replied with their own. Once Tom Shields was settled in his seat, Mark asked him if there was any need for introductions. Tom Shields replied that he thought he could remember everyone; Mrs Shields added, "*The faces anyways.*"

Neither Tom Shields nor Mrs Shields was able to remember certain team members' names in post-meeting interviews, although they were able to identify from which discipline team members were (for example, occupational therapy). At the same time, neither Tom Shields nor Mrs Shields said that they felt uncomfortable because of their unfamiliarity or the number of professionals present. When I explicitly asked, both Tom Shields and Mrs Shields said they were glad to have so many different people presenting their own perspectives on the assessment, and for the opportunity to ask these people directly any questions. Both Sue and Noelle, however, expressed deep dissatisfaction with the meeting's structure: the number of professionals was intimidating, and the potentially personal information being spoken of would not facilitate a young person in assimilating or responding to findings.

Diagram M: Seating at Tom Shields' EV Full Meeting

Entrance to Room



Indeed, Tom Shields and Mrs Shields spoke little within the meeting. In the 40 minutes, Tom Shields spoke ten times, and Mrs Shields sixteen times. Tom Shields talked only to say hello to meeting participants and to answer yes and no to questions. The majority of Mrs Shields' comments were made at the end of the meeting, and she then talked informally about the weather. Both Tom Shields and Mrs Shields, however, felt that their views and wishes were heard; both explained that they had simply had little they wanted to add.

Mark began the meeting with a short introduction directed towards Tom Shields:

*Well, what ah we've been doing for the last forty-five minutes is just amongst ourselves different folks who have examined you and chatted with you and so on, we just brought everybody up to speed of what they **thought** was happening and some of the recommendations. Over the next few minutes, you'll get not everything in-depth, but a **precis** of some of the strengths and some of the areas of concern. And some of the suggestions for of what might be considered more ideal for you down the road, when you finish school, working in some of those areas. But the important [thing] for you to recognise is that, everybody really enjoyed meeting with you? And ah chatting with you.*

Mark openly explained that a previous meeting had been held. He arguably decreased the team meeting's formality and potential intimidation for Tom Shields (for further discussion of such techniques, see page 143). Mark outlined the agenda for the meeting—a report of Tom Shields' strengths and “*some areas of concern*”, with some post-school suggestions. Mark ended with an emphasis on Tom Shields' strength: his interpersonal skills.

Mark then referred to Sue's concern in the team meeting:

Maybe it's Sue and Noelle who said it more than the rest of us, because we don't know you as well, sometimes I think you talk too much. Is that a possibility?

All the meeting participants laughed, except the school personnel. Tom Shields responded, “*Sometimes,*” which was also met with laughter. Mark concluded, “*Sometimes. Well you and I make a good pair.*” Mark put forward Sue's potential criticism in a joking manner. He then included himself in the criticism, thus potentially diverting the negative impact of the criticism (see pages 148 for other example). Neither Tom Shields nor Mrs Shields overtly appeared distressed by this inexplicit criticism, either in the meeting or in the post-meeting interviews. Sue, however, was displeased with how the

criticism was raised “*so flippantly*”, in relation to what she perceived as a real difficulty within vocational situations.

Mark re-emphasised “*everybody’s*” enjoyment at meeting Tom Shields and proceeded to explain that “*a little report*” would be sent out to him minuting this meeting. The recommendations would be followed up with Tom Shields in four months. Tom Shields replied, “OK,” and Mark invited Marie to give her occupational therapy report.

Marie said ‘hello’ to Tom Shields, who responded in turn. Marie began by reminding him of their past meeting. Marie avoided most of the technical terms used in her first verbal report and contained within her written report (with the exception of the term “*prehension*”). Marie covered the same topics as in the preceding team meeting. Marie asked Tom Shields about his eyesight. Mrs Shields responded that her son had been tested and did not need glasses. Marie repeated her concern, and Mrs Shields re-emphasised the eye-test findings.

Marie described Tom Shields’ perseverance with difficult tasks, thus perceiving a positive aspect to his “*problems*” with certain tasks. Marie talked of the assessment in terms of what Tom Shields was “*better*” at and what he had “*problems*” doing. Marie concluded with three recommendations: encouraging Tom Shields to “*keep a good sitting posture*”; using a calculator with mathematics (thus taking on Sue’s suggestion from the team meeting); and avoiding tasks that required speed, emphasising that Tom Shields was very accurate at slower speeds. Marie asked Tom Shields if he had any questions. He answered that he had not.

Joan (the recreationist) said ‘hello’ to Tom Shields. As Marie had done, she reminded Tom Shields of their previous interview together. Joan complimented him on his pleasant presentation and all the activities in which he was engaged. Joan spoke from the basis of what Tom Shields had told her in their interview. Joan asked Tom Shields if he remembered in which areas he had requested extra information. After a silence, Joan continued by informing Tom Shields about swimming, summer camp and pottery class opportunities. Joan emphasised, “*It will be up to you to contact these people and to set up a time to go.*” She handed over written information to Tom Shields, inviting him to telephone her if he required any help in pursuing these interests. Joan asked Tom Shields if he wanted more information on other areas, and Tom Shields replied no.

Mark invited Kim to speak. Kim began her social work report by stating that she had met once with Tom Shields and Mrs Shields, and then once alone with Tom Shields. She directed her report to Tom Shields both by making eye contact with him and using relevant pronouns. Kim said that Tom Shields appeared to be "*coping well*", and complimented his presentation as a "*very pleasant, motivated, very responsible young man*". Kim described the housing information package she was going to hand over to Tom Shields, naming the various apartment options and emphasising the long waiting lists for them. Kim said that presently she perceived no reason to be involved, but invited Tom Shields to contact her if he needed any assistance. Kim provided an opportunity for Tom Shields to ask questions, but again he did not have any.

Liz said 'hello' to Tom Shields and passed along 'hello's' from the technician who had administered the psychological tests to him. Again, Tom Shields' pleasant working habits were praised. Liz joked that Marie (the occupational therapist) must have stolen her notes, as her report was very similar. Indeed, four EV team members later wrote on their post-meeting questionnaires that they were satisfied with the broad consensus of different team members' findings and on recommendations.

Liz gave a lengthy report, speaking directly to Tom Shields. Liz continually related her points to what had happened in the psychological tests. Liz spoke of his positive working skills, his better incorporation of verbal rather than written instructions, and his preference for straight-forward and familiar tasks. Liz complimented Tom Shields' positive coping skills, which included speaking of his feelings. Liz referred to Mark's comment about Tom Shields talking too much, saying that in the case of feelings, one could never talk too much. Liz said, twice, "*We could all learn something from that.*" Liz concluded her report by agreeing with Tom Shields' asserted interests in secretarial work, which Liz felt matched his abilities. Liz asked if Tom Shields had any questions. He said no.

Sharon, the vocational liaison officer, similarly gave a lengthy and rarely interrupted report. She began by asserting that what she was going to say was unlikely to be new information for Tom Shields. Sharon's report also dovetailed other EV team members' findings, she said. Sharon reminded Tom Shields that they had talked about work. Sharon complemented him for being self-aware of his strengths. She cited Tom Shields' own list of his limitations (speed) and saw little need for extensive vocational exploration. Sharon

suggested that he be referred to the Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). Sharon asked if Tom Shields remembered her explanation of VRS. Tom Shields answered yes, but Sharon gave a description of VRS from the perspective of how he would use it. Sharon thought VRS might consider an employer assessment, which Sharon also explained. Sharon set out a specific time-frame for the VRS referral (particular months a year and a half in the future) and the incumbent process. After a further elaboration on the advantages of the employer assessment and what VRS could offer, Sharon asked Tom Shields if he had any questions. He did not ask any.

Mark summarised the meeting:

Tom, you've heard from, a fair number of folk this morning and, as I said, we'll put everything down in writing, 'cause it's hard to remember everything that people talk about. I think that however, the ... for you, it's not going to be quite the same, for you were able to tell all the folks during the assessment what you thought your strengths, and where you thought some of your areas needed some improvement upon, and nobody's going to disagree with that. I think that you do have that, fair degree of insight. ... Do any of the staff have any other comments or concerns that they want to raise? () Sue or Noelle, any? ()

Mark recognised that a great deal of information had been raised at one time, and offered the meeting's minutes as a reminder for Tom Shields and Mrs Shields. In our post-meeting interviews, Tom Shields and Mrs Shields seemed quite cynical about the expected contents of the minutes. They expected that the written material would take a long time to reach them (if it reached them at all) and would have little content. When I talked to Tom Shields and Mrs Shields six months after the meeting, they had been pleasantly surprised by the written material arriving shortly after the meeting. The meeting's minutes did cover all the EV team members' verbal reports and incorporated changes or comments within the meetings (for example, Mrs Shields information about the recent eye-testing was noted). The minute was three pages long and therefore did not cover the detail of the meetings. Recommendations were laid out both within the minute and in a summary at the end. The recommendation summary did not include the VRS referral, although this recommendation was contained within the minutes' text. No mention was made of the follow-up appointment in four months.

Meeting participants were clear in post-meeting questionnaires, however, that the VRS referral was a recommendation from the meeting. Broadly, most participants did write down the same recommendations

(typically, eight out of ten participants for each recommendation). Tom Shields stated his own responsibility for carrying out certain recommendations. Various other participants were noted as responsible for other recommendations, with three participants not noting their own responsibility while other participants did.

The EV team members' written reports contained even more information than that which was provided within the meetings: for example, details about Tom Shields' schooling and family composition. Certain of the written reports had considerably more technical language (unexplained) than the verbal reports given in the team and full meetings, and all noted Tom Shields' medical diagnosis. Two facts did not match between reports (Tom Shields' starting date at his present school and his work placements). Psychological testing was cited in two reports and the minutes, in terms of grade levels (Grade Three) and "*mild mental retardation*". These details were not raised within either of the team or full meetings. Both Sue and Noelle stated their aversion to the use of such descriptors generally, as unnecessarily negative.

At the end of the full meeting, Kim interjected an invitation to Tom Shields and Mrs Shields to telephone any EV team member if they should have any questions in the future. Mark thanked Tom Shields and Mrs Shields for attending the meeting. Over informal talk, meeting participants gradually left the room.

- *Overview*

Tom Shields and Mrs Shields expressed surprise that Sue, the school teacher, did not participate more in the meeting. Sue in fact said nothing during the formal part of the full meeting (only contributing to the informal talk before and after). Of course, Tom Shields and Mrs Shields had not been present in the initial team meeting where Sue had been more active. Sue herself cited the redundancy of her attending both the team and full meetings.

In the team meeting, Sue had questioned and added to findings and recommendations. Sue there took on the role of information recipient and its accompanying possibility for critique. Sue did cause one recommendation to be changed (albeit not in that team member's written report presumably kept on file) and her comments were referred to within the full meeting.

Overall, both Noelle and Sue were firmly dissatisfied with their presence at the EV meetings. They found the repetition time-consuming and redundant,

they felt embarrassed at being present when sensitive material was reported, and felt that they rarely heard new information. While neither Tom Shields and Mrs Shields expected to find out new information, they did say—at the meeting and in post-meeting interviews—that they had learnt little. All four of these people wondered what would actually happen to Tom Shields when he left school, and were worried whether an actual job would be found.

Noelle and Sue were emphatic—both on the post-meeting questionnaires and in interviews—that while the assessments were thorough and broad, no action resulted from the meeting. Sue stated this succinctly in our interview: *“What’s the use of all of the assessments if the student isn’t active out in the community?”* Sue criticised the setting of the assessment within the *“medical model”* and wondered why the community was not offering assessments/ placements. Sue did not want to abolish the EV assessments, though, for at present nothing else was offered to the students at her school.

Amy, another staff member at the school, attended the full meeting but did not speak throughout. Afterwards, she was confused that a particular issue—for which she had referred Tom Shields to the assessment—had not been raised. Similarly, Tom Shields could not understand why that particular issue, nor the possibility of his attending college, had not been raised at his meeting. Both these issues had actually been addressed and shelved within the preceding team meeting but were not raised within the full meeting. Neither Amy nor Tom Shields asked about these issues within the full meeting, despite the invitations to ask questions.

Tom Shields and Mrs Shields both stated their appreciation for the help offered by the EV team members. Both noted that they had had little to say at the meeting, even though Tom Shields had been consistently offered the opportunity to ask questions. Tom Shields and Mrs Shields explained that most of the information was not new to them so that they had had no questions. EV team members used several techniques that arguably made Tom Shields feel comfortable and included in the full meeting. They directed their reports to him, they emphasised his positive abilities, they talked in terms of what he had done and said in the assessments, and worked to lessen any criticism’s sting. Neither Tom Shields nor Mrs Shields were emphatically dissatisfied with the meeting; both said that they felt the meeting had offered them little.

The Future Needs Assessment (FNA) Meetings

1) Gillian Stone

In our pre-meeting interview, Gillian Stone dreaded the next day's FNA meeting. She was both afraid that professionals would not support her desired career—working with horses—and worried that she would argue with her mother in front of all the professionals. She set out a clear objective for her FNA meeting:

I would like to convince them, convince my mother and everyone else, that you know, I'm able to do something around horse-work.

- *The FNA1-2 meeting*

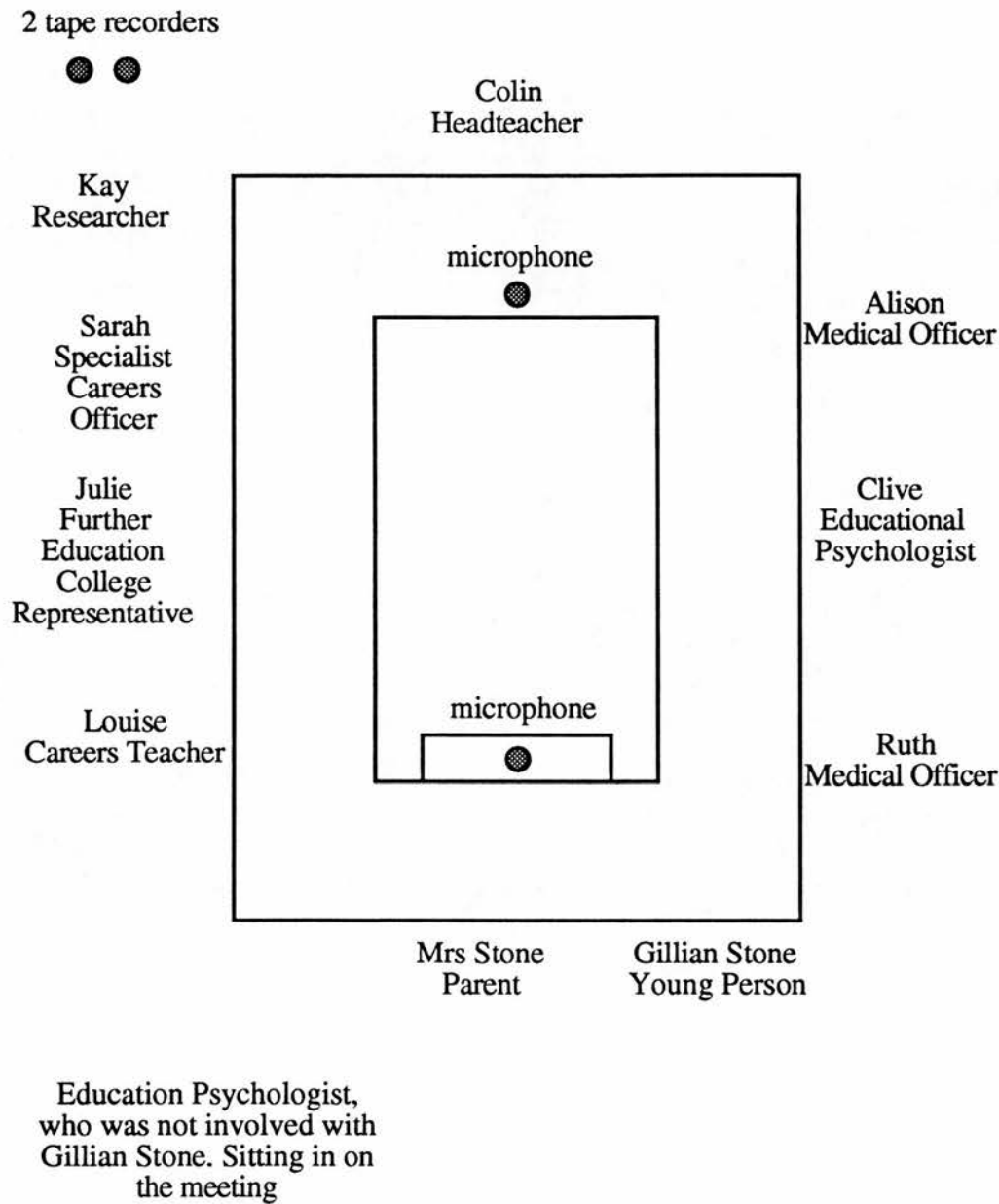
The coffee tray had just been wheeled in for the mid-morning break when Mrs Stone entered the school room. Colin, the headteacher, stopped the bustle to welcome Mrs Stone. All the professionals were introduced to Mrs Stone by name and professional role. The coffee distribution then continued with three professionals serving everybody present, including Mrs Stone. Gillian Stone entered the room as people were talking casually over coffee. Certain professionals interrupted their conversations to greet Gillian Stone; Ruth (a medical officer) offered her a cup of coffee. As all participants settled down around the tables (see Diagram N, next page), Gillian Stone confided quietly to Ruth that she was very nervous. Ruth did not have time to reply to Gillian Stone's statement, as Colin started the formal meeting by introducing all the professionals to Gillian Stone.

Colin followed the introductions by explaining the meeting's purpose:

This is a process that draws together the professionals, the young person, the family to try and make sure that the plans for ... when they leave school are known, agreed upon and operate smoothly.

Colin added that Gillian Stone had "*confused the system*", for she was beginning the FNA process a year later than formally required. Several professionals laughed at Colin's comment.

Diagram N: Seating at Gillian Stone's FNA1-2 Meeting



Entrance into Meeting Room

Gillian Stone made a face at the comment, tensed her shoulders, inhaled and breathed out in a type of laugh—appearing extremely uncomfortable. In a stage whisper, Ruth told Gillian Stone that Colin was teasing her. Gillian Stone settled back in her chair. This pattern was repeated in two other places within the meeting: a professional made a joke about some aspect of Gillian Stone's situation, inspiring laughter from some participants. Gillian Stone appeared uncomfortable—by physically tightening her body and smiling or laughing tensely—and another professional pointed out that the comment was only a joke.

Colin concluded his introduction by inviting Ruth to give a medical perspective. Ruth presented a lengthy report, reviewing Gillian Stone's medical diagnosis, historical development, and functional "*difficulties*". She spoke of Gillian Stone in the third person, apparently directing the report to all participants. Finishing her description by stating that "*we*" were not concerned about Gillian Stone's medical condition, Ruth asked Gillian Stone if the description had been correct. Gillian Stone murmured yes. Colin then followed by asking Gillian Stone if she wanted to add anything. Gillian Stone said no.

Colin next invited the educational psychologist, Clive, to give his report. As with Ruth, Clive spoke of Gillian Stone in the third person. Clive sketched Gillian Stone's move from a mainstream school to Robertson School. He stressed her abilities and briefly commented on her "*difficulties*", academic and physical. Gillian Stone only reported the description of her 'difficulties' in our post-meeting interview, despite Clive's greater focus on her abilities.

Colin added to Clive's report that Gillian Stone might not garner good grades, due to the recent transfer from the other school. The teacher representative, Louise, said that the transition had been very difficult particularly as life was a bit "*slow*" for Gillian Stone. Clive and Louise then entered into a debate over whether or not Gillian Stone should have extra time on her examinations (see Appendix D for transcript section and pages 126-128 for interpretation). When Clive turned to the headteacher for his support on the issue, Colin replied with vaguely affirmative phrases—"We we we can sort of repeat, there's been several, but that's obviously an issue"—that made no conclusive decision. He then immediately looked at Gillian Stone and asked what plans she had for her future.

In my interview with Clive, I played back to him this part of the taped meeting. As described on page 127, I perceived the discussion as tension-filled and I was interested to know his interpretation of his interaction with Louise. I did not anticipate his first response: chagrin that he had not followed up on his suggestion that Gillian Stone have extra time and a vow to do so immediately. Nor did I anticipate his second response. He worried that he and Louise had entered into a dialogue just between themselves. Although he was not sure, he thought that surely other conversations had been going on at the same time (which they had not). Clive appeared most concerned with (failure to) follow up and carrying out a private conversation in a public meeting. He made no mention of any conflict between him and Louise.

Gillian Stone took up Colin's inquiry tentatively. Speaking in a quiet voice, she stated that she would like to stay on at school. Gillian Stone actually had very definitive ideas about her future, which she had expressed to me in our pre-meeting interview. But as stated above, she had been nervous that the professionals at the meeting would deride her desire to work with horses. Mrs Stone actually introduced Gillian Stone's career aspirations to the meeting. Mrs Stone told me in our post-meeting interview that she interjected Gillian Stone's aspirations because she was afraid Gillian Stone would not say them for herself. Mrs Stone began by saying that "*people*" had been discouraging about Gillian Stone's interest. She commented that perhaps the idea was not "*very realistic*". At this point, Gillian Stone added some specific careers through which she could work with horses.

Colin commented that he had no idea about such careers as, "*It isn't the sort of thing that you go to college and take a course on.*" The career officer (Sarah) then added her viewpoint to the discussion, speaking for the first time within the meeting. Sarah reported on her recent interview with Gillian Stone. Unlike other professional participants, Sarah worded her report in terms of what Gillian Stone had told her. Sarah suggested work experience for Gillian Stone so that she would have a more "*realistic idea*" of her capabilities.

Louise at this point admitted that she had been the person who had probably discouraged Gillian Stone from working with horses. She reported looking for work experience but finding nothing with which she believed Gillian Stone could "*cope*". But since Gillian Stone was "*adamant*" that she could work with horses, some sort of experience needed to be found. At this point, one of the medical staff (Alison) introduced two possibilities for work

experience in the area. Alison told me why she interjected these ideas, in our interview:

*I felt [it] was quite damaging to Gillian, the way everybody sort of went, "Oh you won't be doing that" ... You cannot leave **any** child, **anybody** in a situation like that ... You have to make them feel there is something positive for them to do. Or if they want to do a particular thing, try and look at the positive ways that they could do it. And **then** you can work them off it.*

While Alison appeared to concur with Sharon's opinion that working with horses might be impractical, she did not feel that realism should be addressed within the meeting. Alison herself intervened, she said, to ensure that the Gillian Stone's self-esteem was not damaged.

After Alison's two suggestions, Sarah reported that Gillian Stone did "confess" to having missed an opportunity for work experience. Gillian Stone had supposedly not attended a week course because she had not wanted to sit through the afternoon sessions in the classroom. Sarah suggested that Gillian Stone was perhaps more interested in not sitting at a desk than in actually working with horses. Sarah and Alison laughed quite loudly at the end of the description. After a short silence, Mrs. Stone explained that **she** had not permitted Gillian Stone to go on the course, as it had involved a pub lunch and thus potentially alcohol. Mrs Stone's explanation could be seen to correct Sarah's implied criticism. Gillian Stone had not failed to follow up an opportunity, but she had been prevented from attending by her parent. As with Louise's possible criticism of Gillian Stone (as being "slow"), another participant did not allow a professional's implied criticism of Gillian Stone to stand unchallenged.

The meeting continued with two professionals entering into a 'rapid-fire' conversation with Sarah, about keeping "*other options going*" and positive aspects of Gillian Stone's personality. The discussion ended with Colin once again mentioning Further Education: had Gillian Stone considered going to college? Finding that Gillian Stone had not yet attended a college link course, Colin stated that a college link course would be made available the following year. The college representative was invited to describe what courses her college offered.

Colin drew the meeting to a close by asking Gillian Stone whether she had questions to ask. Gillian Stone took this opportunity to state her willingness to work with smaller animals as well as with horses. Again, various

suggestions were raised by the medical and teaching staff. Colin concluded with a summary of what was “*agreed*”: Gillian Stone would attend a college link within the next year; Gillian Stone would have some work experience within the next year to work with animals; and another meeting would be held next year to make firmer decisions about what Gillian Stone would do when she left school.

Despite Colin’s definitive summary, no participant noted **all three** recommendations. All participants indicated in post-meeting questionnaires that Gillian Stone would stay on at school. Mrs Stone said that Gillian Stone would be going to college eventually; four professionals mentioned a college link. Two professionals noted work experience. Further, the college representative did not note that a college link would take place, and the careers teacher did not write down work experience as a decision; yet, presumably these professionals would be partially responsible for implementing these decisions.

Colin inquired if Gillian Stone was “*happy*” with his summary. Gillian Stone answered yes, and Mrs Stone expressed her satisfaction that other ideas had been suggested in the meeting. (Indeed, after the meeting, all participants indicated satisfaction with the decisions.) Colin concluded the meeting by thanking Mrs Stone for coming to the meeting.

After Gillian Stone and Mrs Stone left the room, five professionals continued to talk about Gillian Stone and her interaction with her family. A triangular conversation eventually developed, with two professionals putting forward different interpretations of Gillian Stone’s academic “*difficulties*” to inform the college representative. This conversation stopped when Colin offered the other participants more coffee.

- *Overview*

Certain aspects raised previously in chapters could be found in Gillian Stone’s meeting. Forming a ‘planned and smooth transition’ was the meeting’s stated purpose, according to Colin’s introduction. The familiar choice between staying at Robertson School or continuing on to Miller College was offered, even though Miller College did not appear to be a logical path towards Gillian Stone’s preferred career.

Gillian Stone’s and Mrs Stone’s involvement appeared to be heightened or lessened by seemingly small aspects of the meeting. For example, the coffee break might have diminished the formality of the meeting.

Instead of professionals sitting around a table, looking up expectantly as young people and parents entered the room, participants were milling around the room and chattering about coffee. Arguably, the coffee break also created a more inclusive atmosphere: both Gillian Stone and Mrs Stone were asked to share in the coffee and biscuits. It provided Gillian Stone with the opportunity to share with Ruth her nervousness. Potentially, this established a supportive link between Gillian Stone and Ruth. Throughout the meeting, Ruth explained comments made by other professionals and asserted Gillian Stone's cheerful personality as a major asset. Possibly, the coffee break allowed both Gillian Stone and Mrs Stone to become more comfortable with the setting and the professional participants, before the formal meeting began. Such an inclusive atmosphere seemed needed, for Gillian Stone told me how uncomfortable she had felt walking into the meeting. She was sure that the professionals had been discussing her (whereas professionals talked about Gillian Stone **after** she left the room).

In our post-meeting interview, Gillian Stone voiced ambivalence about 'jokes' made within the meeting. On one hand, she stated her appreciation that people she perceived as "*strict*" were making jokes. On the other hand, she was made uncomfortable by the jokes: "*I was cringing in my seat ... Ruth said, 'That was a joke.' And I sort of went, 'Oh, could have fooled me.' It was a bit embarrassing.*" The concept of lightening the atmosphere was appreciated by Gillian Stone; she seemed less appreciative about the substance of the jokes, which embarrassed her.

Reports tended to discuss Gillian Stone, rather than reports being directed to her. At times, professionals talked about her in critical terms. While apparently defused successfully, Gillian Stone was criticised as "*slow*" and professionals debated this characteristic in front of her and all the other participants. Similarly, the specialist careers officer reported that Gillian Stone had "*confessed*" (thus implying that Gillian Stone felt guilty) to not following up a work experience opportunity. Mrs Stone this time countered the implied criticism, and said that she had been responsible.

The combined interventions from Alison and Mrs Stone appeared successful in creating a positive discussion of Gillian Stone's aspirations. Three times within our post-meeting interview, Gillian Stone stated her delight about the meeting participants' acceptance of her aspirations. She felt that she had been listened to—a pleasant surprise, she reported:

*You know, most things I say, everybody turns down as a **stupid** thing, you know. "Oh **you** can't do that," you know, and, "That's a **dumb** thing to say, we can't take that seriously."... But at this meeting, I was quite quite good.*

Gillian Stone expressed considerable pride in her ability to express her ideas to the other participants, and felt that the other participants did listen to her. When I talked to Mrs Stone after the meeting, she was also relieved that the professionals had not blanketly discouraged Gillian Stone's career aspirations. Gillian Stone and Mrs Stone expressed their high satisfaction of the meeting, in terms of how Gillian Stone's career aspirations seemed listened to and discussed.

2) Traci Miadich

In our pre-meeting interview, Traci Miadich told me she was dreading the FNA meeting. She and her family disagreed about her future, and she was worried that they would argue over this at the meeting. She anticipated being "*really embarrassed*" at arguing in front of all the meeting participants. When Traci Miadich entered the room for the meeting, she gave me a wry smile before sitting down and pulling her hair over her face.

- *The FNA2 meeting*

Traci Miadich arrived at the meeting with her parents and the case social worker assigned to her family. They took the empty seats at the end of the table, facing the headteacher (see Diagram O, next page). Professionals proceeded to finish writing in files, and then opened Traci Miadich's files to the relevant pages. Finally, all the papers stopped rustling and the headteacher, Colin, began the meeting.

Thanking people for coming, Colin then introduced the professional participants around the table—with the exception of the case social worker (Helen). Professional participants were introduced by their last names and professional roles. Colin then described the Future Needs 'system':

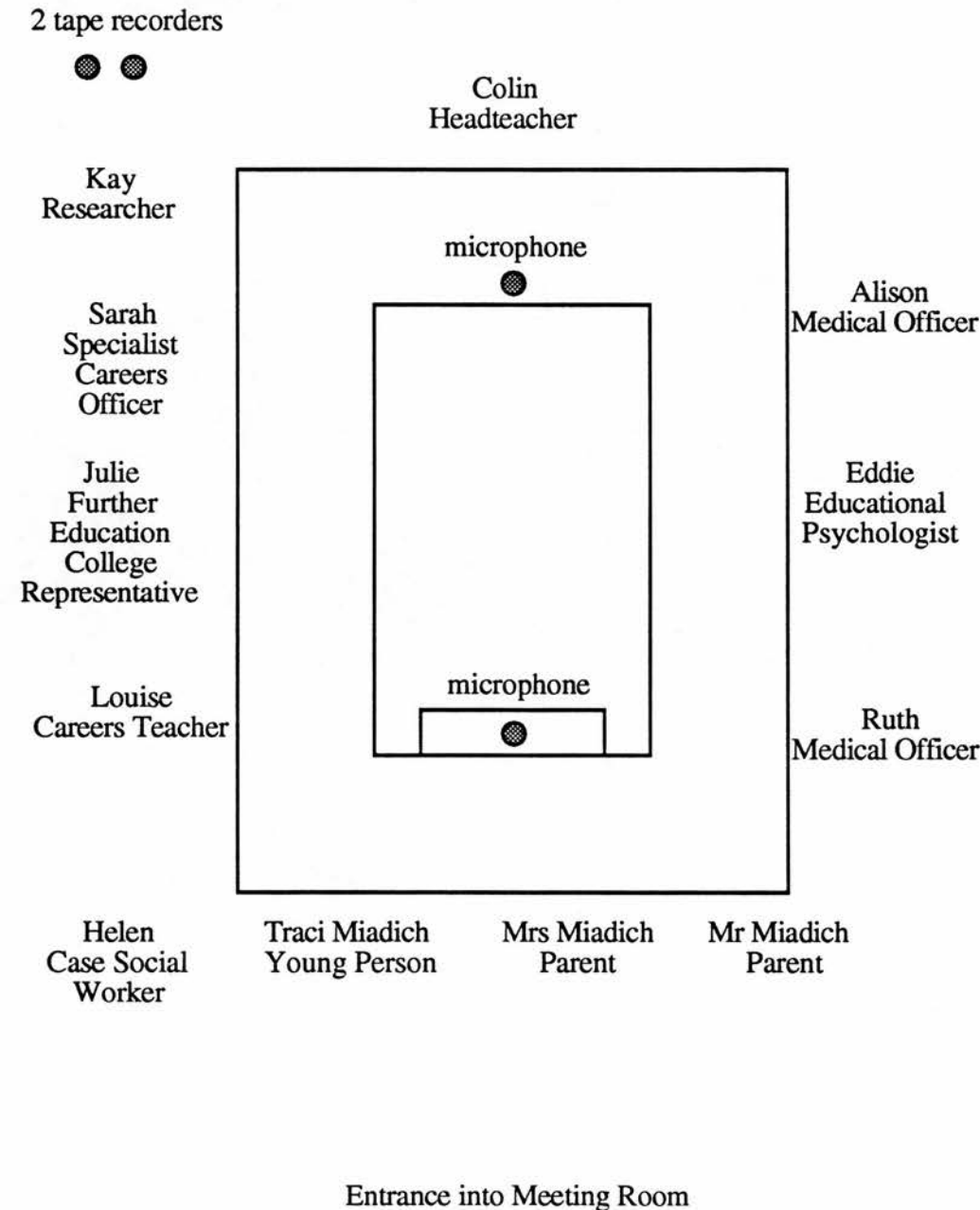
[It] tries to collect everyone together to ah make sure that plans are being have been made for young people when they are ready to leave school. Ah and tries to ensure the smoothness of the transition from school provision to post-school provision.

Colin's introduction to Traci Miadich's meeting raised expectations common in other FNA descriptions (see Chapter 6). 'Bringing people together' was the

first recognised objective of the FNA system. Colin’s introduction concentrated on the “smoothness” of the transition from one type of provision to the next.

Colin then outlined an agenda for the meeting—to make some “sorts of” decisions about what Traci Miadich wanted to do—and emphasised that Traci Miadich was by “no means” the least important person in the process. Colin invited Ruth to give the medical background and update.

Diagram O: Seating at Traci Miadich’s FNA2 Meeting



Ruth started by talking of Traci Miadich's own ability to give her medical report, but that Ruth herself would "*just say a few words*". Colin interjected a demand for Traci Miadich to give her medical report, which was met by general laughter from meeting participants. Ruth overrode this laughter and began to make her report.

Ruth spoke of Traci Miadich in the third person, covering her medical diagnosis, treatment needs and improved health. Twice through her report, she asked Traci Miadich if she agreed with her comments. Both times, Traci Miadich answered yes. Colin also invited Traci Miadich to add any information at the end of Ruth's medical report. Traci Miadich did not add anything. Despite these opportunities within the meeting, Traci Miadich expressed her disagreement only after the meeting, in our interview. Both Traci Miadich and her parents were incensed at inaccuracies within the medical report.

Colin moved the meeting on by asking Louise, the careers teacher, to give the school report. Again, Louise referred to Traci Miadich in the third person. The report began positively by emphasising Traci Miadich's improvement. Louise moved on to describing Traci Miadich's "*problem*" in not being able to "*concentrate*". Louise then gave a list of courses and possible grades for Traci Miadich. At the end of the list, Louise highlighted Traci Miadich's recent successes in business studies. Louise ended her report by informing the group of Traci Miadich's choice of a nursery (for children) for her work experience, which should take place soon.

Again, Colin invited Traci Miadich to comment. When Traci Miadich did not respond, Colin asked why Traci Miadich chose the nursery. Traci Miadich answered shortly: "*Just fancy it.*" Louise suggested Traci Miadich might try an office-based work experience due to her talents in business studies. Ruth noted that Traci Miadich looked unhappy at this suggestion, and the professional participants laughed.

Colin then asked Traci Miadich generally what she wanted to do. Traci Miadich replied that she had not thought greatly about the future. Colin specified his question to what she wanted to do at the end of the year, and Traci Miadich said she wished to stay at Robertson School. Colin asked if Traci Miadich maybe should think about attending college. Traci Miadich shrugged her shoulders and began to play with her pony tail in front of her face. Colin asserted that Traci Miadich would likely benefit from attending

college in “*due course*”. After reviewing what courses Traci Miadich would take in Robertson School, Colin commented in a light tone:

You'll forgive me for saying it, but but the overwhelming enthusiasm isn't actually pouring from you. Is that the sort of things that you want?

Despite Colin's invitation, Traci Miadich did not add any more details but murmured, “*Hmm hmm.*”

After a long pause, the specialist careers officer Sarah spoke for the first time in Traci Miadich's meeting. Sarah agreed with the plans being put forward, on the basis of what Traci Miadich had told her in an interview a few weeks previously. She told the meeting participants that she and Traci Miadich had discussed specific courses at Miller College. She indicated that Traci Miadich had never been to Miller College and hence did not know exactly what courses were on offer. Sarah promised Traci Miadich that she would be able to visit college before she had to decide.

Colin asked Mrs Miadich how she “*felt about that*”. Mrs Miadich replied, “*If that's what Traci wants...*” and ended her statement by saying she was unable to say more at that time. After the meeting, Mr and Mrs Miadich said they had felt unprepared to participate in the meeting and were angry that they had felt unable to do so.

Ruth, the medical representative, reminded Colin to mention Traci Miadich's difficulties with housing arrangements. The FE college representative noted that housing might be an issue for college. Colin then asked about the status of the social work Section 13 report. The educational psychologist said the report had been completed. Some discussion ensued about the status of the Section 13 report and when it would be reviewed. Ruth asked if Traci Miadich knew what the report was, and Traci Miadich said no. Both the psychologist and case social work asserted that Traci Miadich **did** know, reminding Traci Miadich of the assessment she had undergone. Helen, the case social worker, described the legislation and said no involvement was needed at present. She added that Traci Miadich might be glad to know that she was leaving the post next week; Helen said that Traci Miadich was not happy with being involved with social work and at being considered ‘disabled’. After the meeting, Traci Miadich expressed her feeling of exclusion from the discussion of the Section 13 report. She described the professionals as “*talking amongst themselves*” and failing to explain adequately to her the report.

Colin quickly drew the meeting to a close by asking "*colleagues*" if they had any other issues to raise. At the lack of response, he asked Traci Miadich if she wanted to add anything, and then if both she and her mother were "*happy*". He concluded by asserting that "*we'll take that forward*" and that another meeting would be held the next year.

Despite Colin's lack of summary at the end of the meeting, all participants except Traci Miadich thought that decisions were made at the meeting. All participants (except Traci Miadich) noted in post-meeting questionnaires that Traci Miadich would stay at school. Other decisions were less consistently noted. Four professionals wrote that Traci Miadich would attend college in the future. A variety of professionals were indicated as responsible for carrying out the decisions: four professionals noted school representatives' responsibility and three professionals noted the specialist careers officer's responsibility. Other professionals were more randomly noted: the psychologist (two professionals), the college representative and the social work department (one professional each). One professional noted on her questionnaire that decisions were: "*not very clear—no action required immediately.*"

When Colin had concluded the meeting, Traci Miadich, her parents and the social worker left the room. After the Miadichs and the case social worker left the room, the remaining professionals continued to discuss Traci Miadich and her family. Subjects were covered ranging from Traci Miadich's family situation, to her potential difficulties in moving away from home to go to college, to Traci Miadich's ability to "*run rings around*" staff trying to provide her daily medical treatment.

As I joined the group in the hall, Mr and Mrs Miadich erupted into impassioned criticism. Traci Miadich looked to me as if she were ready to cry. With some difficulty, I encouraged the group to move to the interviewing room for a more private discussion. For over ten minutes, Mr and Mrs Miadich talked heatedly about the meeting with occasional additions by Traci Miadich. Helen, the case social worker, took alternative roles within the conversation. At times she agreed with the Miadichs' criticism and at other times pointed out the constraints the professionals were under in the FNA meetings. Finally, Helen concluded that she would approach the headteacher to arrange a meeting with the Miadichs and the school, to clarify the issues raised at this FNA meeting.

- *Overview*

Traci Miadich scarcely talked within the meeting. In total, Traci Miadich spoke nine times, and five of these contributions were yes and no answers. Four professional participants noted Traci Miadich's lack of contribution in their post-meeting questionnaires. Further, Traci Miadich physically showed considerable discomfort throughout the meeting. She played with her pony tail in front of her face for over half the meeting. She rarely made eye contact when she spoke, and typically stared at her pony tail or at the desk in front of her. As one professional wrote in her questionnaire: *"Could anything have been done to make Traci's contribution more positive?"*

In our pre-meeting interview, Traci Miadich had described extensively her interest in working with children. She had continued, unprompted, to describe specifically what courses she would take at college in order to work in a nursery. She also suggested other possible careers paths, such as working in an office. Within the meeting, Traci Miadich was much less forthcoming despite Colin's invitations to elaborate. One professional wrote that Traci Miadich's communication had been inhibited by the presence of her parents. Traci Miadich also told me after the meeting that she had not expressed her wishes because she wished to avoid an argument with her parents. Traci Miadich's meeting raised the question of how meetings could/ should handle a potential conflict between young people and parents. As Daniels (1982) writes, young people's and parents' ideas and goals for the future are not necessarily synonymous. Parents cannot necessarily be solely relied upon to be the voice of the young people, should the young people be silent. In fact, Mr and Mrs Miadich's presence might have been the very reason why Traci Miadich was so unforthcoming in her meeting.

Traci Miadich's meeting was an anomaly due to the presence of the case social worker. While the social work department representative informed me in our interview that the assigned social worker could be an advocate for the young people, in Traci Miadich's meeting the social worker seemed both excluded from the meeting and actively unwelcomed by Traci. Helen, the case social worker, was not introduced to the other meeting participants. Helen did not verbally contribute to the meeting until her defensive description of the Section 13 report, at the end of the meeting. In the post-meeting interview, Helen oscillated in her comments of the meeting. Sometimes, Helen sided with

the parents in criticising the meetings. At the other times, she would qualify the Miadichs' criticisms, talking of the difficulties professionals faced within the FNA system. Helen appeared to be caught half-way between being a professional participant and advocate for the family, and the compromise resulted in her contributing little to the meeting on either side. Helen certainly did not act as Traci Miadich's advocate in the meeting. Helen's experience raised the question of how well the FNA meetings were able to include 'outside' professionals into the 'inter-disciplinary team'.

Traci Miadich's impression of the professionals did not enhance her involvement. Traci Miadich commented on how she only knew a couple of the professionals present. Some people, Traci Miadich noted, did not say anything during the meeting but "*just sat there staring at you*". Traci Miadich did not have an informal and inclusive welcome with a coffee break, and professionals moving about the room. Instead, the Miadichs and the social worker walked into a room of professionals sitting formally around desks, writing in files. Only after some time did professionals stop writing and papers stop rustling.

Overall, participants appeared most upset after the meeting due to the Miadichs' lack of contribution. Four professionals noted their dissatisfaction with the Miadichs' involvement, at various points on their post-meeting questionnaires. The Miadichs disagreed considerably with certain details given by professionals, but said they felt unable to correct such details within the meeting. Mr and Mrs Miadich cited their lack of preparation as a leading cause of their lack of contributions. The parents had felt ignored and their connection with Traci Miadich unappreciated. Traci Miadich described professional disinterest, intimidation and self-absorption, combined with her parents' presence, as the reasons for her lack of involvement. Traci Miadich expressed a definitive summary of her meeting, which she repeated three times in our post-meeting interview: "*It was a total disaster.*"

Overview of the Four Case Studies

The case study descriptions aimed to convey a sense of how events unfolded. Issues and events previously presented separately were reported here in context, thus suggesting their interrelationship and also, perhaps, the difficulties of marking arrows straight from cause to effect. The striking

differences between the case studies do, however, suggest that variations in attitudes and practice could make a substantial difference to what occurred at the meetings, and the resulting participants' satisfaction.

Scattered throughout the descriptions and interpretations of the case studies were items and issues raised in other chapters. Let us reconsider this material under three themes:

- 1) Approaches to the 'transitional problem';
- 2) Partnership with professionals; and
- 3) Realism and responsibility.

The first theme is a familiar refrain introduced at the beginning of the research. The other two themes are variations on young people's involvement and decisions/ recommendations, recast because of how the issues emerged from the case studies' descriptions and interpretations.

Approaches to the 'Transitional Problem'

Chapter Eight considered the breadth of the meetings' conceptualisations of the 'transitional problem'. FNA meetings were characterised as having a narrow conceptualisation of transition. EV meetings were characterised as having a broad conceptualisation. The detailed description of the case studies threw these conclusions in broad relief.

Gillian Stone and Traci Miadich were offered a 'planned and smooth' transition from Robertson School to Miller FE college. Even when FE college appeared an illogical choice for Gillian Stone's career interest, FE college was raised and a college link course was suggested. FE college might indeed be the most productive place for both Gillian Stone and Traci Miadich. But the repetition of the school-FE choice seemed a fixed pattern in the FNA meetings rather than options matched to the young people's interests.

Some suggestions were made for Gillian Stone and Traci Miadich to gain work experience in their areas of vocational interest. In fact, only one other FNA meeting (of fourteen) made a decision on work experience: Gillian Stone's and Traci Miadich's meetings were unrepresentative in that way. Still, the recognition and plans for the young women to explore their own vocational interests—considered 'unrealistic' by many professional participants—displayed professional participants' sensitivities to the young people's goals and young people's contributions to decisions about their futures. Near the end of Traci Miadich's meeting, two additional subjects were

raised: housing and the Section 13 report (again, exceptional amongst the fourteen FNA meetings).

Both Gillian Stone's and Traci Miadich's meetings were short: about fifteen minutes each. Professionals' reports took up half of both meetings, and the other time was spent discussing the young people's futures. The limited time foreshortened which topics could be discussed, and in how much depth. The discussion, however, was also circumscribed by the type of information provided. Almost all the information provided in professionals' reports was based on the young people's present situation: for example, their medical diagnoses, their school grades, evaluations on their motivation. Professionals' reports typically did not present information in relation to what young people could do post-school—their abilities, their vocational interests, their future goals—but were usually phrased in terms of the young people's present 'difficulties'. Not only the limited time of the meeting, but the information provided by professionals, constrained the conceptualisation of the 'transitional problem'.

The EV meetings broadly defined Val Trudeau's and Tom Shields' post-school transition. Recreational and social activities, vocational abilities and interests, housing, finances, aids for daily living and mobility, future education and vocational services were all addressed in these two meetings. Further, the items were addressed in considerable detail. The topics were often covered by more than one EV team member and the topics appeared to have been extensively explored within the assessments. Suggestions were made on assessment findings and recommendations, themselves influenced by what the young people had suggested within the assessments. Considerable detail accompanied many of the recommendations, from information on housing projects within the young person's local area, to a detailed exercise programme. The agenda of the EV meetings fundamentally seemed most concerned that Val Trudeau and Tom Shields had all the **information** they needed—both about themselves and about their possibilities—to make and enact their own plans for their post-school futures.

Val Trudeau's meeting appeared to combine the breadth of the standard EV meetings' approach with the promised action of the standard FNA meetings' approach. The EV team members in Val Trudeau's meeting repeated their common practice of focusing on young people's abilities, and providing future-oriented assessment findings and recommendations. With the school personnel present at the full meeting, EV team members were able to

operationalise an approach decided upon within the team meeting: to ensure that decisions were made at the full meeting to change Val Trudeau's education. In this way, Val Trudeau's meeting combined both assessment and action and met with considerable satisfaction by EV team members, Val Trudeau and Mrs Trudeau.

Val Trudeau's EV meeting displayed the potential for assessments to result in direct action for change. This action, however, was within the educational sphere. The deciding actors—Val Trudeau and the school personnel—were present at that EV meeting. Neither Val Trudeau's nor Tom Shields' meetings provided direct action for future employment as future employers, or even service representatives with direct contacts with employers, were not present. Mark's ironic jokes about various EV team members being able to 'provide a job' for Tom Shields were reminders of that limitation.

Both Val Trudeau's and Tom Shields' meetings were longer compared to the Scottish FNAs: each full meeting and team meeting lasted over 30 minutes. The longer time allowed for a variety of topics to be discussed, in considerable depth. Professionals' information also facilitated a broad conceptualisation of transition. The previous assessments had been oriented, and were interpreted, to consider what Val Trudeau and Tom Shields wanted to do in their futures, what were their abilities, and what were the opportunities in their local areas. The 'homework' had thus been done from which to make recommendations concerning (and in Val Trudeau's case, to discuss) the young people's futures. The EV team members clearly approached the assessments, their reports and the meetings with a focus on Val Trudeau's and Tom Shields' future possibilities.

Much has been made in past chapters of the potential tension between 'assessment' and 'action' models. EV participants' satisfaction appeared to reflect this tension: participants expressed their (dis)satisfaction primarily in terms of the (lack of) action promised by the meetings. FNA participants, on the other hand, did not appear to base their satisfaction on what action would result from the meetings. Gillian Stone, Traci Miadich and their parents specifically voiced their (dis)satisfaction with their involvement within the FNA meetings. How could this difference between EV and FNA participants be explained?

Young people's and parent's involvement could have been the primary consideration for all participants' satisfaction. If participants felt

satisfied with young people's and parents' involvement, then participants' satisfaction could then have been based on the secondary consideration: whether action would result from the meetings. Traci Miadich's primary consideration seemed to be her and her parents' (lack of) involvement. Traci Miadich did not think that decisions had been made at the meeting, but this was never mentioned in our interview as a reason for her high dissatisfaction. Tom Shields' and Mrs Shields' answers also followed this pattern in our interviews. They did feel comfortable within the meetings and appreciated the help that was offered. They felt disappointed that no action had resulted. Participants in Gillian Stone's meeting, however, did not match this pattern. These participants did not move to the secondary consideration when the primary consideration was satisfied. Rather, participants in Gillian Stone's meeting were delighted about the extent of Gillian Stone's involvement and did not substantially reflect on the action promised.

Young people and parents might all want action to result from the meetings, but young people and parents might differ regarding their expectations that action would be promised. Arguably, the Trudeaus and the Shields were told in their induction not to expect decisions. Mark's introductions to Val Trudeau's and Tom Shields' EV meetings did not direct the meetings towards making decisions. Mark promised reports of assessment findings and suggestions for the future. The Trudeaus were pleasantly surprised by the action resulting from their meeting—hence their satisfaction based on having an action plan. The Shields were not surprised by the lack of action from their meeting, but they nonetheless expressed some wish that more concrete opportunities had been opened. In FNA meetings, young people and parents predominantly perceived the meetings' purpose as making such action-oriented decisions (see pages 99). Both Gillian Stone's and Traci Miadich's meetings were introduced as aiming to make such decisions (see Colin's introductions pages 220 and 227) and both meetings resulted in action plans—however unclear. Since neither the Stones nor the Miadichs doubted that action plans would be made, arguably the emergence of action plans was unremarkable. Traci Miadich, however, did not think that decisions had been made at the meetings but this lack did not appear to affect her dissatisfaction.

Participants' expectations not only of meetings' results, but also of young people's involvement within the meetings, might have affected their eventual satisfaction with the meetings. The meetings differed when young

people's—and to a lesser extent parents'—involvement was expected and invited in structuring the 'transitional problem'. The opportunity occurred **prior** to the EV meetings, for EV young people and parents. The EV team members' reports were predominantly expressed in terms of Val Trudeau's and Tom Shields' (and their parents') statements in assessment interviews. Recommendations were often made in direct relation to young people's previously expressed interests. The Trudeaus and the Shields arguably had taken their opportunity to structure the 'transitional problem'; their involvement was thus not at stake within their EV meetings. In the FNA meetings, both the Stones and the Miadichs were offered this opportunity **within** the meetings themselves. Gillian Stone took up this opportunity, with the encouragement of Mrs Stone. Traci Miadich and her family did not. Gillian Stone and Mrs Stone were delighted that Gillian Stone's career aspirations appeared to have been listened to and worked upon, within the FNA meeting. Other participants noted that the meeting had "*flowed well*" and that participants had "*listened to*" Gillian Stone. The Miadichs expressed a feeling of exclusion from the meetings' discussion. Other participants noted dissatisfaction that Traci Miadich and her parents had contributed little to the FNA meeting. Young people's and parents' involvement in identifying specific paths was critical for certain FNA participants' expressed satisfaction.

No single reason seemed to explain why participants were more satisfied with certain meetings than others. Rather, a combination of young people's and parents' involvement, whether action was promised, and whether participants' expectations were met seemed to influence participants' satisfaction.

Partnership with Professionals

Bringing professionals together with young people and parents is considered essential, by most of the transition literature—to ensure interdisciplinary co-operation and collaboration and to prevent the present situation of fragmented post-school services (see pages 2 and 37) What evidence of co-operation and collaboration was evident within the meetings?

Conflict between meeting participants was not inevitably negative. Clive's confrontation with Louise seemed to mediate Louise's previous criticism of Gillian Stone, and did not detract from the following discussion. The EV team members, Val Trudeau and Mrs Trudeau all at times openly disagreed with Harriet, the school teacher, but the majority of participants at

Val Trudeau's meetings were delighted with the resulting decisions.⁵

Exclusion of meeting participants seemed a more significant detraction from co-operation and collaboration, in the four case studies. Of the professionals, 'outside' professionals clearly did not have the same involvement within the meetings as other professionals.

My description 'outside' already suggests that these professionals did not act as full members of the 'inter-disciplinary team'. In Traci Miadich's meeting, a case social worker attended the meeting with the Miadich family. Arguably, the case social worker was an under-utilised resource: both as a possible advocate for Traci Miadich and/ or her family, and as a professional. In the EV meetings, the school personnel had different levels of inclusion within the EV 'team'. Two of the school personnel in Tom Shields' meeting appeared more included in the EV 'team' than the school personnel from Val Trudeau's school. In part, this difference could be explained by attendance at the team meeting. Sue and Noelle attended the EV team meeting, and there commented upon and influenced recommendations. They were thus part of the recommendations' co-ordination. Amy, who did not attend Tom Shields' team meeting, did not speak at all within the full meeting and left with her central question unanswered. Similarly, Harriet and Norman did not attend Val Trudeau's team meeting although they were apparently invited. Amy, Harriet and Norman thus lost the opportunity to be part of the recommendations' co-ordination, and the collaboration on the approach for the full meeting.

Of course, Val Trudeau's meeting was different in that specific action was advocated, and the people who were present could enact this action (Val Trudeau and the school personnel). The team meeting set a clear agenda—to persuade the school personnel to alter Val Trudeau's schooling—and anticipated conflict. Indeed, conflict between the school personnel and the EV team members occurred during the full meeting. In this way, the school personnel largely took on the role of human obstacles and reluctant future actors.

⁵Significant conflict between professionals and young people/ parents did seem to result in negative situations, in other meetings not discussed here. For example, see discussion of David Bassot's and Mrs Nimes' initial unacceptance of EV recommendations (pages 150-152 and 161) and FNA professionals' disagreement with Michael Smith's educational description (pages 128-129 and Appendix D) and John Mitchell's future goals (pages 131-132 and Appendix D). Young people and parents did not sustain their arguments against the professionals, and were, in almost all cases, extremely upset and angry with the results.

Certainly, no outside professional ever participated in the same way as did the core group of FNA professionals (who sat through all FNA meetings) and the EV team members. The outside professionals neither acted as advocates for the young people and parents, nor were they requested to give reports. The outside professionals tended to be information recipients. They did typically interact more with the recommendations/ decisions than young people or parents did. Overall, though, outside professionals did not take on a formative role within the meetings but reacted to the core team members' comments and suggestions.

While a professional hierarchy within the 'core group' did not seem the most problematic aspect of the four case studies, the medical officers within Gillian Stone's notably intervened at points that had no direct relation to their medical expertise. Their viewpoints were apparently listened to, and seemed to direct the discussions. Medical officers were invited to present their reports first in both Gillian Stone's and Traci Miadich's meetings. In contrast, the specialist careers officers were not invited in either Gillian Stone's or Traci Miadich's meetings to give their reports, and in both meetings had to insert their information without invitation. The specialist careers officers both talked in Gillian Stone's and Traci Miadich's meetings in terms of what the young people had told them in previous interviews. The specialist careers officers thus differed from all other professionals, who reported on the basis of their professional expertise only. Specialist careers officers might have been vehicles for young people's opinions to be asserted within the meetings. By their marginalisation within the agendas of both Traci Miadich's and Gillian Stone's meetings, specialist careers officers did not significantly take on this advocacy role.

Considerable attention has been paid in past chapters to young people's involvement within the meetings. These case studies again described the lack of young people's (and parents') verbal contributions to the meetings, despite the frequent invitations by professionals to do so. The case studies amply demonstrated, however, that the number and extent of verbal contributions were not the most salient factor for young people's and parents' satisfaction with their involvement. Rather, the Miadichs and the Stones seemed most concerned about whether or not they felt their views were listened to, and the Shields' and the Trudeaus' sense of comfort and inclusion within the meetings seemed to determine their satisfaction with their involvement.

The number of professional participants was suggested as an intimidating factor in Chapter Seven (pages 116-117 and 136-137). While numbers might have affected the young people, neither Val Trudeau nor Tom Shields expressed the distress over professional numbers that both Traci Miadich and Gillian Stone did. Other factors appeared at least to affect the potential intimidation of numerous professionals. These included: familiarity with the professionals; what young people thought would happen at the meetings; if young people thought they were being discussed 'behind their backs'; and how professionals interacted with the young people at the meetings.

Val Trudeau and Tom Shields were familiar with the professionals at their meetings. They had met the EV team members during the previous assessments, and if they did not remember the EV team members by name they were at least familiar with their faces. EV team members sought to make connections with both Val Trudeau and Tom Shields to remind them of their past contact, which arguably enhanced both young people's sense of familiarity with the professionals. Gillian Stone had not met all the FNA professionals before her meeting, but had the advantage of the coffee break in which she could become more familiar with the setting. While intimidated by the unfamiliar professionals, she did feel able to assert her views with the support of Mrs Stone. Traci Miadich and her family, on the other hand, did not have the informal coffee break. Traci Miadich particularly commented on faces with which she was unfamiliar, who she felt stared at her throughout the meeting, and which made her feel very uncomfortable.

Tom Shields alone was not apprehensive about his meeting, in our pre-meeting interview. Gillian Stone, Traci Miadich and Val Trudeau all expressed considerable apprehension before the meetings. Gillian Stone was particularly concerned that she would be unable to express her views against the weight of the other participants' views. Both Traci Miadich and Gillian Stone were worried that a conflict with their parents would take place in public before their meetings. The expected presence of several other professional participants thus intimidated both Gillian Stone and Traci Miadich. Val Trudeau, on the other hand, was afraid that she would once again hear about her failures. Val Trudeau's apprehension was thus about information, rather than the presence of other professional participants. Even before the meeting, the FNA young people anticipated having difficulty with the numbers

attending the meetings; Val Trudeau expressed different fears, about hearing sensitive and negative information.

Both Gillian Stone and Traci Miadich felt that discussions and decisions had been made 'behind their backs'. Both expressed views that they had walked into meetings that previously had been discussing them (in actual fact, meeting participants discussed the young people and their families **after** they had left the meetings). Both young people felt uncomfortable enough about being discussed when they were present; the young people were even more uncomfortable at the thought of being discussed when they were not present. In contrast, neither Val Trudeau nor Tom Shields expressed any discomfort about the team meetings held before they entered the room. The team leader in both cases openly explained, in his introductions to Val Trudeau and Tom Shields, that a discussion had taken place and that the results were now going to be relayed to the young people. The four young people seemed to feel differently about professionals discussing them without their presence, on the basis of whether the discussion was 'hidden' or openly explained.

The possible effects of professionals' interactions with young people, on young people's involvement, have been extensively addressed in other chapters. The four case studies particularly demonstrated the significant differences between the EV and FNA meetings, which were often small events that built up to different approaches. Consider, for example, how information was presented within the meetings. Professional reports were directed to Val Trudeau and Tom Shields in their EV meetings. Information and recommendations were framed by a discourse of what Val Trudeau and Tom Shields had said and did during their assessments. The professional reports emphasised the young people's abilities and down-played areas in which the young people were not strong. The audience of the professionals' reports was primarily the young people in the full meetings, and the EV team members tried to present the material as sensitively as possible. In the FNA meetings, professionals' reports were not directed (solely) to Gillian Stone and Traci Miadich, but spoke of the young people in the third person. The professional reports emphasised the young people's present situation and predominantly spoke in terms of young people's 'difficulties'. Only the specialist careers officer's reports were framed by what Gillian Stone and Traci Miadich had said in previous interviews. The audience of the FNA professionals' reports

was predominantly the other professionals at the meetings⁶, and at times the way the information was presented did not appear to take into account how Gillian Stone and Traci Miadich might react.

The descriptions of the case studies themselves emphasised how much longer the EV meetings took than the FNA meetings. The EV meetings were particularly long because information was repeated in both the team and full meetings. While certain professionals felt that such repetition was redundant, it did allow for professionals to collaborate and to co-ordinate a sensitive approach for both Val Trudeau's and Tom Shields' meetings. In both the young people's full meetings, a particular approach to the young person's abilities was repeated by almost every professional. The FNA meetings did not co-ordinate a professional approach, and disagreements took place within the FNA meetings. Disagreements between professionals in Gillian Stone's did not appear to detract from her participation, particularly because criticism was diverted by the disagreements. FNA professionals as a group, however, were unable to create a comfortable environment for Traci Miadich and her parents in which they could feel included and to contribute.

Certain events within the four case studies appeared critical turning points for young people's sense of comfort and inclusion. Within the FNA meetings, how the young people and parents were welcomed into the meetings appeared to affect their comfort. Gillian Stone's inclusion in the coffee break seemed to create a more comfortable atmosphere while Traci Miadich's entrance into the formally set up meeting seemed intimidating. Jokes made and the laughter at the FNA meetings arguably excluded and embarrassed Gillian Stone and Traci Miadich, rather than included them, at particular times within their meetings. Young people's responses to the headteacher's request for their own views appeared another turning point. Gillian Stone, with encouragement from Mrs Stone, voiced her interests. The professional participants discussed her interests (even though several thought Gillian Stone's interests were unrealistic). Traci Miadich provided little detail about her goals and the headteacher was unable to elicit more information. In this instance, Traci Miadich's interests were not immediately taken up by the

⁶ This conclusion was based on three details. First, young people were at times asked to confirm the accuracy of the professionals' reports, indicating that the information was already known to the young people. Second, since young people and parents would have known the information already, directing the reports to them would be redundant. Third, the young people were not specifically noted by name or by grammar as the recipient of the reports, but rather were typically discussed in the third person.

discussion but another alternative suggested. Traci Miadich looked “*very unhappy*” at this alternative. Gillian Stone was delighted that her interests were taken up and discussed by the group; Traci Miadich felt that she had been unable to state her views.

Within the EV meetings, Tom Shields and Val Trudeau were warmly welcomed by the professionals present. When professionals were introduced to Val Trudeau and Mrs Trudeau, Val Trudeau and Mrs Trudeau were also introduced to the professionals. Possibly critical points occurred when criticism was raised within the EV meetings. The team leader sought to lessen any impact of his off-hand criticism of Tom Shields. Shortly after the school teacher implicitly criticised Val Trudeau, Val Trudeau voiced her low opinion of her abilities. The EV psychologist quickly countered Val Trudeau’s opinion, supporting her views with assessment findings. Val Trudeau appeared to accept the psychologist’s view. Considerable work was done by the EV team members to ensure that Tom Shields and Val Trudeau felt personally supported.

The case studies thus provided considerable insights into partnerships between participants:

- Not all professionals appeared to be included equally in collaborating and co-operating;
- ‘Outside’ professionals were particularly under-utilised as either advocates or experts; and
- Certain aspects of the meetings appeared to encourage or discourage young people’s (and parents’) partnership with the professionals.

In part, the differences between the EV and FNA meetings seemed not only due to sensitive or insensitive practice. The expected functions and roles of the young people, parents and meetings were different between the two types of meetings. FNA young people and parents seemed to expect, and were expected, to be involved verbally and thus to contribute to the decision-making. EV young people and parents seemed to expect, and were expected, to have contributed their views before the meetings. The young people would act on the recommendations after the meetings, but within the meetings the EV young people and parents would largely act as information recipients.

Realism and Responsibility

A critical point raised in the previous section was FNA professionals’ reaction to young people’s views. If young people provided little answer, as Traci Miadich did, participants were generally dissatisfied with young

people's involvement. If young people did provide specific goals, as Gillian Stone did, realism became an issue. How the professional participants handled these goals and their perceived realism then largely determined participants' satisfaction from Gillian Stone's meeting.

Most professionals apparently felt that Gillian Stone's goals were unrealistic. Certain professionals, however, felt that the initial response to these 'unrealistic' goals was negative. When reflecting on Gillian Stone's meeting, professionals deliberated on what response should be given in such situations. One professional spoke of the possible damage done to young people and parents if unrealistic expectations were left unchallenged. When young people and parents failed to reach these goals, said the professional, already fragile self-esteem was further hurt. On the other hand, other professionals stated that most young people were unrealistic in their teens. These professionals said that the young people would gradually come to realistic expectations through their own personal and work exploration. The FNA meetings were definitely not the context in which to deal with unrealistic expectations, being such a public and intimidating venue.

These two views could be seen in professionals' reactions to Gillian Stone's aspirations. In her meeting, participants noted their satisfaction with the balance met. Possibilities were suggested to Gillian Stone but the advisability of considering different options, and the realism of her ideas, was also raised. In other meetings (for example, see Appendix D transcript and interpretation of John Mitchell's meeting pages 131-132), the interaction over students' 'unrealistic' expectations was considered by participants as much less satisfactory.

How to deal with young people's 'realism' appeared to have been given considerable thought in the EV team. Team members tended to provide very similar responses to my questions about 'realism' in interviews. The team members said that young people's and parents' 'realism' indeed could be tension-filled and problematic issues within the assessments. Team members perceived their role as that of being honest and direct assessors—for they had an obligation not to raise false expectations—while, at the same time, stressing strengths rather than weaknesses and avoiding negative and stigmatising labels.

While the label 'mild mental retardation' and (low) reading grade levels were used in two written reports and the minutes from Tom Shield's meeting, the Trudeaus and the Shields received verbal reports that largely emphasised

the young people's strengths and avoided negative labels. The term 'abilities' was used repeatedly in their verbal reports (whereas the term 'difficulties' characterised most FNA reports given at meetings). The Trudeaus were explicitly satisfied with the emphasis on Val Trudeau's strengths and the sensitive acknowledgement of Val Trudeau's 'areas of some concern'.

A comment in Tom Shields' meeting raised an issue felt to be more problematic for the EV meetings. Here, Joan emphasised Tom Shields' responsibility to carry out the recommendations: *"It will be up to you to contact these people and to set up a time to go."* Joan had expressed her frustration, in our interview, over young people's failure to follow through on recommendations:

I would say that most of the patients that I work with have a motivation problem, and you can only do much with that. Like you can sit there and counsel them for let's say three sessions, on motivation. If they're really not motivated after that, how much more can you do?

Joan wished that she could, *"Give them a motivation pill, stick a pill in their mouth and motivate them."* The frustration in Joan's comments was almost palpable. While she and other team members put considerable effort into assessments and recommendations, Joan stated that young people often did not take up their responsibilities to carry out the recommendations.

Other EV team members also described the same difficulty: recommendations often were not implemented due to young people's 'lack of motivation'. Two EV professionals viewed young people's 'lack of motivation' from a particular perspective. Was it 'real' to expect the young people to carry out the recommendations? One EV professional explained:

... A lot of these people aren't going to be self-motivated, and often it is um, it's a physiological thing or I mean, it has to do with the way they are or an environmental thing, the way they've been brought up. And they need, they need guidance and support. You can say from here to tomorrow that, "You're an adult and you've got to behave in certain aspects," they're not going to. And I mean, that's the reality of the situation.

This professional revealed the underside of stressing young people's responsibility. When young people did not take on the responsibility, these young people 'fell through the cracks'. Where was the balance between respecting young people's independence and being 'realistic' about their abilities?

More usually, EV young people's responsibility for recommendations was perceived positively. Such recognition respected young people's independence and facilitated their empowerment. The young people were no longer children but adults, and they had to take responsibility for their own lives, explained the team members. But, EV team members asked themselves, what was the point of all the assessment when little action appeared to result?

Written minutes were taken of the Tom Shields' and Val Trudeau's meetings. Given the volume of information and advice presented to Tom Shields and Val Trudeau, the written material appeared to be essential resources for the young people who were unable to recall all the recommendations themselves after their meetings. If these written minutes were essential records of the EV meetings to the young people, then the inaccuracies were problematic and unuseful representations of the meetings.

Neither Traci Miadich nor Gillian Stone was responsible for implementing any decisions. Rather, the professionals would orchestrate any changes in placement or work experience. Despite the summary at the end of Gillian Stone's meeting, however, professional participants did not all recall the same list of decisions made at that meeting. No summary was given at the end of Traci Miadich's meeting, and Traci Miadich later reported that no decisions were made at her meeting whereas all other participants did think decisions were made. Written minutes of the meetings thus seemed essential reminders to participants, to ensure that people knew who was responsible for which decisions and a timetable was made for the decisions' implementation. No written minutes were available from Traci Miadich's and Gillian Stone's meetings for all participants.

Out of the four case studies, responsibility for recommendations/decisions was consistently and clearly assigned in only Val Trudeau's meeting. Young people might be primarily responsible in EV meetings and professionals primarily responsible in FNA meetings, but unless these people were clear on what the recommendations/decisions were, their responsibilities and their time frames, actual action on the recommendations/decisions seemed in doubt.

CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSION

Over the last decade, attention has focused on the difficulties many young disabled people face when they leave school. Research has charted the young people's obstacles and frustrations in gaining access to employment, further education, housing, daily living assistance, transportation, and social and recreational opportunities (see Chapter 2 for discussion of research). Over and over again, the transitional literature states the necessity of improved inter-agency, inter-disciplinary co-operation and collaboration, in assessing, planning and managing young disabled people's transition from school (see pages 2 and 37).

What kind of solutions are such assessments, plans and management to the 'transitional problem'? How do the collaborators perceive the 'transitional problem', and thus how do the collaborators seek to address it? How do the various collaborators contribute to these perceptions?

This research sought to answer these questions through a case study approach. Two different models of providing inter-disciplinary collaboration for young people's transition were considered: Educational-Vocational Assessments (EVs) held in the Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre (SRC), Ontario and Robertson School's Future Needs Assessments (FNAs) in Colburne Region, Scotland. Each of these assessments brought professionals, young disabled people and their parents in contact, when the young people were preparing to leave school. Meetings were held to co-ordinate assessments and recommendations/ decisions.

These meetings were the particular focus of the research. They provided an opportunity to consider the **process** of inter-disciplinary collaborations—**how** collaborators conceptualised and sought to address the 'transitional problem'. They also provided an opportunity to consider the **product** of such collaborations—**what** was conceptualised as the problem(s) of transition, what were the suggested solutions and participants' satisfaction with them. The meetings provided an observable slice of inter-disciplinary collaborations, in which the issues above were often close to the surface.

Additional meetings similar in type were also attended. Other FNA meetings at Robertson School were attended prior to the formal research; I observed a set of FNA meetings at another Colburne school; I attended a meeting in Durham, of the type that originally inspired the EVs in Sheldon. While these other meetings were not part of the research, they did allow me to

put the fieldwork meetings into context of other similar meetings, and thus did alert me to both the exceptionality and the representativeness of the observed meetings.

Rather than extensive, the research offers an intensive exploration of the meetings. Each meeting contained numerous actions and interactions, which together added to a substantial volume of evidence to support particular interpretations. Structural issues were also considered, which went beyond the meetings observed. The questionnaires and interviews before and after the meetings provided both information in themselves and a check on my own observations and interpretations. The analysis examined the meetings from my particular perspectives and interests, and offered interpretations. The analysis aimed to open up the 'transitional problem' and the service 'solutions' to increased scrutiny, and to encourage questioning of present practice and consideration of alternatives.

Brief Summary of the Research

The analysis began with an exploration of the purposes of the meetings. **Chapter Six** asked: what did participants think the meetings were for? What was the FNA meetings' stated purpose, according to official guidelines and law? The responses varied. In the FNA meetings, purposes ranged from advising young people on their futures to deciding future service provision. In the EV meetings, certain participants emphasised assessment and recommendations while others expected action. The lack of follow-up, discussion and professional control over bureaucracy were raised as problems by certain FNA participants.

Differences in wording were noted in professionals' discourse. FNA professional participants referred to 'children' or 'young people', whereas most EV professionals used the terms 'clients', and, less often, 'adolescents' or 'individuals'. EV professionals consistently referred to themselves as either 'team members' or 'each discipline'. FNA professional participants lacked consistent terminology in referring to themselves. Various inferences were drawn from these differences in terminology. EV professionals might have perceived the young people as more central, and their views as more important, than FNA professionals did of FNA young people. The EV meetings

could be described as collaborative, between professionals, with young people and parents attending the meetings to hear the results of professionals' collaborations. The FNA meetings could be described as co-operative, with young people, parents and professionals brought together to co-ordinate future action.

The analysis suggested a variety of issues to consider in following chapters. Whose expectations appeared to be met within the meetings? How were the meetings used to construct a particular approach to the 'transitional problem'?

Chapter Seven considered young people's involvement. The meetings' arrangements and proceedings were analysed. Young people's opportunities for involvement were considered: offers within both the EV and the FNA meetings themselves, and young people's contribution to the prior EV assessments and later responsibility for the EV recommendations. Possibly inclusive or exclusive aspects of the meetings were described. Largely, the analysis suggested that professionals' expectations prevailed through their structuring of the meetings' agendas and their verbal dominance within the meetings. The analysis conclusively showed a lack of verbal contribution by young people. EV professionals displayed several interaction patterns that appeared to enhance young people's comfort, whereas FNA professionals at times increased young people's sense of exclusion.

Chapter Eight focused on recommendations/ decisions: how recommendations/ decisions were made, their content and how they were to be operationalised. The analysis suggested that—while arguably based on young people's opinions—recommendations/ decisions were largely co-ordinated and finalised by professionals in both EV and FNA meetings. The EV meetings covered a much wider range of transitional issues than the FNA meetings. The EV meetings typically resulted in recommendations, which the young people predominantly would implement. The FNA meetings tended to make decisions, which the young people rarely had the responsibility to implement. The FNA meetings could promise direct action by professionals, as agency 'gatekeepers' participated (e.g. social work department, Further Education college and specialist careers office representatives). In contrast, the EV professionals were not 'gatekeepers' to most future opportunities for the young people. Little direct action was thus promised by the EV meetings. The analysis suggested that follow-up on the recommendations/ decisions was

problematic, in terms of overall clarity of decisions, evaluation of the meetings' effectiveness and of what happened to individual young people.

Chapter Nine looked at four different meetings (two FNA and two EV meetings) in detail. The chapter had two main purposes. First, the four case studies tried to provide a holistic view of the meetings' processes. Events and interpretations previously raised out of context, could be re-considered in a context closer to that which the participants actually experienced. Second, the four case studies facilitated an examination of participants' satisfaction with the meetings. The analysis was thus brought full circle: from Chapter Six's consideration of how participants viewed the meetings' **purpose(s)** to Chapter Nine's consideration of how participants viewed **what happened** at the meetings.

The case studies demonstrated that the meetings' approach to the 'transitional problem' was not only determined by timing and those who attended, but also by what information professionals reported at the meetings. Professionals did not all have equal status within the 'inter-disciplinary team'. Particularly, 'outside' professionals failed to collaborate and co-ordinate substantially with the other professionals. Certain aspects of the meetings appeared to encourage (or discourage) young people's and parents' involvement within the meetings. These aspects ranged from: young people's and parents' familiarity with the professionals, to what young people thought would happen at the meetings, to whether young people thought they were being discussed 'behind their backs', to how the professionals interacted with the young people. The case studies suggested that the two related issues of realism and responsibility were problematic—both for professionals' interactions with the young people, and for what was likely to result from the meetings.

Overall, FNA participants were proportionally more likely to state **dissatisfaction** with individual meetings than were EV participants. EV participants were proportionally more likely to state **satisfaction** with individual meetings than were FNA participants. Proportionally, more EV than FNA participants were likely to express **ambivalence** towards individual meetings. EV participants tended to base their satisfaction upon which recommendations were made, whereas FNA participants tended to express their satisfaction in terms of young people's involvement.

Theoretical Contexts

How do these findings and interpretations suggest answers to the research questions? Kirp's five policy frameworks and the empowerment concept provide broader theoretical contexts in which to place the research's findings and interpretations. The meetings can be compared and contrasted by their policy frameworks—what kind of solutions did the meetings offer? How did the meetings conceptualise the 'transitional problem' and address it? (A summary of how findings could be interpreted by Kirp's five policy frameworks can be found in Table S, on the next four pages) The concept of empowerment provides a tool for evaluation. When young people's empowerment is considered the priority, the concept can place young people firmly in the centre of the analysis.

Kirp's Five Policy Frameworks

In Chapter Four, Kirp's five policy frameworks were discussed. To review, Kirp identifies five potential frameworks in which policy can be situated: professional, political, legalistic, bureaucratic and market-led. Within the **professional** framework, professional expertise prevails. Political judgement, direct ideologically-driven clashes or bargaining amongst interested groups drive policies within the **political** framework. Legal norms, and particularly fair decision-making, are relied upon within the **legalistic** framework whereas the **bureaucratic** framework depends on consistency and internal accountability. The market determines and decides policy, within the **market-led** framework. (1982 pp.137-139)

Kirp's distinction between professional and bureaucratic frameworks was further expanded in Chapter Four. Both professionals and bureaucrats make claim to expert knowledge, which they apply to individuals. But while professionals apply abstract knowledge to individuals, bureaucrats apply specific knowledge about rules. Professionals are accountable to their peers, whereas bureaucrats are accountable to their supervisors. Both Kirp and Fulcher (1989) suggest that bureaucratic and professionals frameworks can co-exist with considerable ease, and that professionals are increasingly employed by bureaucracies. Kirp and Fulcher fail to consider, however, possible tensions between professional and bureaucratic frameworks. For

Table S: How findings could be interpreted by Kirp's five policy frameworks

frameworks considered most descriptive	Educational Vocational (EVs) Assessment Meetings	Future Needs Assessment (FNAs) Meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional • legalistic • political <p>Framework considered dominant: professional.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings were set within Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre, organised by an inter-disciplinary team. • EV team members selected young people to be clients. • EV team members decided what assessments to do with clients. Used professional expertise to evaluate young people's test results and interviews, in order to make recommendations. • Professionals' reports available with appointment. • 4-10 professionals attended the meetings. • Professionals held official team meetings (to create 'holistic pictures') without young people or parents present. • EV team member chaired meetings. • EV team members verbally dominated meetings; young people and parents rarely spoke in meetings. • EV team members' reports were the basis of the meetings' discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional • legalistic • bureaucratic <p>Framework considered dominant: bureaucratic.</p>
professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings were set within Sheldon Rehabilitation Centre, organised by an inter-disciplinary team. • EV team members selected young people to be clients. • EV team members decided what assessments to do with clients. Used professional expertise to evaluate young people's test results and interviews, in order to make recommendations. • Professionals' reports available with appointment. • 4-10 professionals attended the meetings. • Professionals held official team meetings (to create 'holistic pictures') without young people or parents present. • EV team member chaired meetings. • EV team members verbally dominated meetings; young people and parents rarely spoke in meetings. • EV team members' reports were the basis of the meetings' discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings were set within school, organised by educational professionals. • 4 professionals required to write reports for each young person's FNA2 meetings.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals' reports circulated only to other professionals, and not to young people nor parents. • 6-8 professionals attended the meetings. • Professionals sometimes held (unofficial) pre- and post-meeting discussions, without young people or parents present. • Professional chaired meetings. • Professionals verbally dominated meetings; young people and parents rarely spoke in meetings. • Professionals' agendas largely prevailed: e.g. decision typically made between same 2 choices at each meeting; parents' questions tended to be diverted or left unanswered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people stated their opinions, which were usually judged as 'realistic' or 'unrealistic' by professionals. • Professionals largely had responsibility for decisions, when responsibility assigned.

<p>political</p>	<p>Educational Vocational (EVs) Assessment Meetings</p> <p>Potential background influence of the disability advocacy movement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people (and parents, when young person living with parents) invited to every EV full meeting. • Young people in centre of assessment process and meetings; e.g. reports largely addressed to them within full meetings; the assessment contents were largely directed by what young people wanted. • Young people asked if they had any questions frequently within meetings they attended. • Young people largely responsible for implementing recommendations. • EV meeting minutes sent out to young people (and parents) and individual team member reports available with appointment. 	<p>Future Needs Assessment (FNAs) Meetings</p> <p>Potential background influence of the disability advocacy movement and parental rights. Possible effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people and parents invited to every FNA meeting. • Young people asked what they want for their futures within almost every FNA meeting. • Young people and parents asked if they were 'happy' at the end of each meeting. • Parents had opportunity to disagree with Education Authority's decisions, in reply to the formal letters. • No official pre- or post-meeting held without young people or parents present (unofficial discussions only). <p>Meetings legislated by Education (Scotland) Act of 1981, and Social Work Section 13 reports required by Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act of 1986.</p> <p>Legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All young people with a Record of Special Educational Needs receive FNA process.
<p>legalistic</p>	<p>Potential background influence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The disability advocacy movement. B. The federal/ provincial commitment to disabled people's 'independence', 'participation' and 'integration'. C. Rights of disabled people embedded in Section 15, Canadian Charter of Rights. <p>Possible Effects (see also political framework):</p>	

<p>legalistic cont.</p>	<p>Educational Vocational (EVs) Assessment Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings' reports focused on young people's abilities. • For any people not attending the meetings, young people had to give permission for them to receive meeting minutes and EV team members' reports. 	<p>Future Needs Assessment (FNAs) Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation required particular time frame for meetings, particular professional reports to be made, and particular decisions to be made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - if the young people would stay in school post-16; - if the young people would benefit from further educational provision after Robertson School; - if the young people's record of needs would be closed, post-16; and - if the young people were officially 'disabled' by social work criteria. If 'disabled,' what statutory services should be available to the young people. (Only the first two of these decisions were typically addressed within the meetings.) • Education Authority must send letter stating decisions to parent (a copy should be sent to all professional files as a bureaucratic requirement)
<p>bureaucratic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EV team members provided written assessment reports for each client. These reports were given orally within the meetings and filed for future access. • Structure of team meeting followed by full meeting, even when professionals did not perceive a need to co-ordinate their recommendations before presenting them to the young people and parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines further specified that further professionals' reports be made for every FNA2 meeting (others required by law). • 'Assembly line approach', in order to fulfil requirement of seeing all recorded young people at particular time: i.e. meetings constrained to 10-20 minutes; young people and parents entered and left room while professionals stayed for following meetings. • Discourse of a 'planned and smooth transition' within both professionals' expectations and FNA introductions—arguably a focus on the bureaucratic process. • No participants saw themselves as personally responsible to alter unsatisfactory elements of meetings.

market-led	Educational Vocational (EVs) Assessment Meetings	Future Needs Assessment (FNAs) Meetings
	<p>Possible background influence of available opportunities. Particularly, the difficulties in finding employment. Possible effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No challenge to the (limited) opportunities available in community but focused on the individual young people.• Focused on young people's employment abilities, but did not direct young people to actual jobs.	<p>Possible background influence of available opportunities. Particularly, the difficulties in finding employment. Possible effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No challenge to the (limited) opportunities available in community but focused on the individual young people.• Professionals focused on 'reality' of young people's future goals.

example, professionals can feel that their professional expertise is constrained when forced to follow bureaucratic rules. (See pages 56-57 for further discussion.)

Few policies are situated in only one framework, according to Kirp. Frameworks can work in combination or sometimes in tension with one another. The frameworks used inevitably affect how the 'problem' is perceived and what 'solutions' are offered. Once a 'problem' is perceived/created by particular frameworks, change tends to be incremental rather than revolutionary. (Kirp 1982, pp.137-140)

In which of Kirp's frameworks could the EV and FNA meetings be situated? What were the possible effects of these placements, in conceptualising and addressing the 'transitional problem'?

The Educational-Vocational (EV) Meetings

The EV meetings appeared to be shaped largely by three frameworks: legalistic, political and professional. Aspects of the EV meetings could be attributed to the other frameworks (see Table S, pages 253-256), but the fieldwork data suggested these three frameworks were the most influential.

- ***The Legalistic/ Political Frameworks***

Within the Canadian context, the rights of disabled people exist at the conjunction between legalistic and political frameworks. The disability advocacy movement—at both local and other levels—has become a lobbying force listened to by policy makers. Largely due to the movement's work, the rights of disabled people have been embedded firmly in Canadian law by the new constitution. A rhetoric of 'independence', 'participation' and 'integration' pervades the official discourse around disability, to be guaranteed by a combination of governmental policies, adequate funding and legal protection.

Part of this political assertion has fought against past rehabilitative and service practices. Disabled people have insisted on control of their own lives, to have services adjusted to disabled people rather than disabled people adjusted to services, and for disabled people to be considered clients rather than recipients of charity (Tisdall 1990).

The effects of this insistence could be traced within the EV meetings. Young people were placed figuratively within the centre of the meeting, with their wishes informing the eventual recommendations and their final control deciding what would happen to the recommendations. (For further discussion, see pages 266-268.) In these ways, the young people were treated as influential clients, who would use the professional advice as they saw fit.

- *The Professional Framework*

While the legalistic/ political framework seemed to influence the EV meetings, the professional framework appeared to dominate the meetings.

The EV meetings were set within a rehabilitation centre and organised by an inter-disciplinary professional team. Young people were not required by any law or regulation to have such assessments and meetings, but neither did young people have a right to them. Once they were referred, two team members determined whether the service was appropriate for the young people. By their setting and their selection procedure, the EV meetings were placed within a professional framework.

Professional expertise was used to assess young people's abilities and interests, and then to make recommendations. Professionals had the flexibility to adjust the assessments to meet young people's stated interests, and to address questions raised by the clients and others. The assessments were both intensive and extensive, and could provide the young people with professionally judged 'facts' to support their interests, and with assessment profiles to present to other agencies. Professionals' recommendations based on these assessments provided considerable advice and information to the young people.

While outside professionals altered recommendations, few young people and parents made attempts to modify recommendations and no recommendations were modified as a result. Recommendations were largely discussed and debated in the team meetings preceding the full meetings. Professionals there discussed the young people (and their families) and only there were recommendations ever modified. The professionals then provided 'holistic pictures' to the young people and their parents in the following full meetings. Young people and parents were thus not part of the recommendations' finalising stage: professionals constructed the 'holistic picture'.

The Rehabilitation Centre and the team itself did provide some bureaucratic hierarchy between the EV team members and their managers. Individual EV team members were responsible both to their division, and to the EV team leader. The actual substance of their work—rather than their time schedule—was largely based on their professional expertise and judged by their peers. In this way, the bureaucracy of the Rehabilitation Centre and EV team provided a structure in which professional expertise was used.

Professionals' expectations could be seen as directly addressed and met within the EV meetings. Professionals had expected that they would assess young people's strengths and weaknesses, make recommendations, report information and present a 'holistic picture' to the young people and parents. These components were consistently carried out within the meetings. Some young people and parents expected the meetings to provide assistance for the young people's futures, and a few young people and parents hoped that actual employment placements would be suggested. Young people's futures and employment abilities were addressed within the meetings. A few recommendations promised assistance; no actual employment placements were offered or suggested. Certain young people and parents left the meetings expressing disillusionment that more action had not been promised. Other young people and parents had expected, but still were disappointed, that the meetings would not result in significant new information or opportunities. While professionals' expectations were largely met by the EV meetings, several young people and parents had hoped that the meetings would offer more than they did.

- *The Resulting Policy Setting: the conceptualisation of the 'transitional problem'*

The professional framework dominated the EV meetings' policy setting. Professional expertise set the assessments' and meetings' structures, professional expertise decided the recommendations, and discussion and changes of recommendations most often took place in the team meetings where the young people and parents were not present.

At the same time, filaments could be traced of a legalistic and political discourse advocating disabled people's rights, centrality and control of their own lives. While the assessments were professionally decided (that is, which questions to ask, which tests to administer), they were interpreted in reference to what young people wanted (for example, young people's future goals and

wishes). Young people and parents were given the opportunity to comment on, question or disagree with professionals' findings and recommendations. Young people (and their parents) were largely responsible for implementing professionals' recommendations and thus largely retained control of future action. In these ways, professional expertise was put at the service of young people and young people's own opinions about, and goals for, their futures.

One professional explained the EV meetings' mandate:

When these young people are reaching the stage, "Well, what do I want to do?" you're trying to give them some idea, at this particular moment in time, what their strengths are, what their weaknesses are, what they perceive their interests to be, and how do [these] match with the resources that are, the possibilities that are, available.

The EV meetings offered inter-disciplinary professional collaboration in **assessing and advising** young people about their futures. The EV meetings did not offer such collaboration in planning and managing the young people's futures. Young people (and their parents) would largely decide what advice would be followed. Within the EV meetings, participants thus defined the 'transitional problem' in a particular way: young people lacked sufficient and useful information. The meetings provided this needed information, based on professional assessments and advice.

The Future Needs Assessment (FNA) Meetings

The FNA meetings could be placed within three policy frameworks: professional, legalistic and bureaucratic. As with the EV meetings, aspects of the FNA meetings could fit into other frameworks (see Table S, pages 253-256). The fieldwork data, however, suggested that these three frameworks were the most influential.

- ***The Professional Framework***

Professional organisation, expertise and implementation were relied upon within the FNA meetings.

The FNA meetings were held within Robertson School and organised through the school and wider educational system. Professionals orchestrated the details of the meetings, from constructing the assessment reports, to convening and chairing the meetings. Professionals regularly gave lengthy

reports that were seldom questioned by others. Young people's opinions, on the other hand, were often questioned and evaluated. Professionals' opinions typically prevailed over young people's and parents'. Young people's and parents' opinions did not appear to be as powerful as professionals'. (See pages 170-180, and 267 for further discussion.)

Young people were able, on occasion, to direct the subject matter of decisions by their statements within the meetings (for example, Tom Akroyd's desire to attend Miller College). Professional evaluation, however, still held sway. Professionals' decisions of whether or not young people were 'realistic' tended to determine whether or not young people's future ideas were operationalised (Gillian Stone's meeting being a possible exception. See case study in Chapter 9 for discussion).

Professionals were typically responsible for implementing decisions. Young people and their parents were very rarely cited as responsible for decisions. One FNA professional explained why:

Well, we'd be concerned that some interventions would be left up to some of the young folk or their families, that they might not be done. And they would therefore be disadvantaged by not doing something. Long term.

Such a view sharply contrasted with the EV meeting's reliance on young people's implementation of recommendations.

The professional framework was strongly evident in the existence of the unofficial pre- and post-meeting discussions between professionals, when young people and parents were not present. Ruth defended these discussions as necessary for professionals to fulfil their roles sensitively:

... sometimes we have meetings that iron out things, to make sure that what is very painful information can be conveyed in a less painful fashion. This is for the benefit of the young person and their family.

Certainly, the FNA meetings demonstrated many instances when information was not presented sensitively. If professionals had talked about their approach before the young people and parents entered, perhaps insensitive incidents might have been avoided. (For example, the EV meetings had such discussions between professionals only, and the EV meetings with the young people and parents were hailed as sensitive by meeting participants.) Whatever the suitability, Ruth's reasoning was clearly set within a professional framework. The discussion would be for 'the benefit' of the young person and their family. As a term, 'benefits' tend to be bestowed. In

Ruth's statement, professionals would decide what information 'benefited' young people and their families, and bestow these benefits on the young people and their families. No painful information appeared to be expected back from the young people and parents; professionals would convey information and young people and parents would react to it. Ruth firmly posited the pre- or post-meeting discussions within a professional framework.

Certain discourse surrounding, and used within, the meetings displayed the professional framework. For example, one professional corrected my use of 'service providers' in our interview. Professionals could not be called service providers, she said, but must be called professionals. She went on to say that this difference explained why most reports were not given from the young people's perspectives. Rather, reports were based on professional opinions.

- *The Legalistic Framework*

Legislation was an obvious framework for the FNA meetings, as their very existence was mandated by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended. Other legislation had expanded the legislative duties to local authority social work departments (Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986). Traces of this legal framework could be seen within the meetings. The oft-repeated choice between staying at school and attending Further Education college matched one of the required decisions set out in the 1980 legislation as amended (Section 65B-(5a)). The 1980 Act as amended required the FNA process to begin at a certain age for every recorded young person. Robertson School held meetings strictly to this age requirement.

The Scottish legislation appeared to provide a structure for the FNA meetings, but a structure that was not always followed. Within the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended, the local education authorities must send a copy of the FNA report to the parents. Whether parents were sent letters by the Education Authority was unknown¹; no files consulted contained such letters from observed FNA2 meetings up to six months later. If the parents did not receive such letters, they had no written record with which to state their disagreement. The social work Section 13 reports were not consistently

¹Unfortunately, I had not asked young people and parents originally for permission to contact them six months after their meetings. Thus I felt it inappropriate to contact them concerning this matter.

completed for young people's FNA2 meetings. Yet, the reports were rarely mentioned within the meetings, despite the legal requirement for them. Whether a young person's record would remain open or would be closed was not raised as an issue in any FNA meeting observed (despite such a decision being legally required by the 1980 Act as amended). In short, young people's and parents' right to have FNA meetings were consistently met, but not all legally required components of the process were completed.

- ***The Bureaucratic Framework***

While perhaps not successfully guaranteeing young people's and parents' rights, the legislation did firmly establish a bureaucratic framework for the FNA meetings.

In practice, the bureaucratic requirements appeared to structure the meetings. Robertson School had been assigned a particular day on which to hold its FNA meetings. The FNA meetings were held on a tight schedule in order to fulfil the requirements of seeing all young people at the appropriate time. Meetings followed a consistent pattern and any deviation from this pattern was explicitly discouraged. When young people and/ or parents asked questions not part of this pattern, their questions were typically left unanswered (as were the Mitchells'), diverted to another time (like the Taits'), or dealt with cursorily (as with the Lovatts'). (For further discussion, see page 170.)

All the professionals worked within the various departments of the Local Authority.² The professionals had ascribed functions within the FNA meetings, laid down by guidelines and legislation. Certain professionals at the meetings functioned as 'gatekeepers' to their services. The 'gatekeepers' suggested particular services for which the young people might be eligible. At other times, the 'gatekeepers' disagreed with other participants about young people's eligibility for their agencies' services. Ultimately all professionals were answerable to their managers, but the professionals had considerable room to use their professional expertise. For example, advice was given to educational psychologists on how to structure their FNA reports, but reports by different educational psychologists varied greatly in style, specific tests administered (if any) and the type of information provided.

²Further Education Colleges were not independent institutions at the time of fieldwork.

At times, the bureaucratic framework appeared to support the professional. The professionals were the key movers of the bureaucracy, and their agendas to fulfil bureaucratic requirements were most often adhered to within the meetings. On the other hand, professionals expressed dislike of the bureaucratic structure that remained a 'token' rather than being filled out by professional work. As one professional criticised:

I think that a lot of people regard that Future Needs as a chore. It's a thing we have to go through, but we don't do this, the work we need to, in any other way.

The bureaucratic nature of the meetings arguably distanced professionals from taking responsibility to alter the meetings. The FNA 'system' had its own framework to be followed which professionals saw themselves as largely unable to change.

- ***The Resulting Policy Setting: the conceptualisation of the 'transitional problem'***

While the insistence on parental and disabled children's rights might have politically influenced the original legislation, the resulting legalistic framework of the FNAs did not seem to provide a strong political framework for parents or the young people. The legalistic framework did guarantee the rights of young people to FNAs and various components within them. The legalistic framework, however, was only successful in ensuring FNAs meetings were held and decisions made on young people's educational provision; only half of the required components were definitely fulfilled in the meetings observed. Rather than political, the legalistic framework resulted in a bureaucratic structure that enhanced professional control—while discouraging professionals to see themselves as responsible for the meetings.

The meetings offered a bureaucratic structure in which professionals would co-operate in assessing young people and planning young people's futures. Professionals would largely decide what provision would be provided for young people in the future. In this way, the FNA meetings addressed the risk of professionals failing to co-ordinate their services. If appropriate provision were made for young people when they left school, then a smooth and planned transition would be ensured and young people would not be left

at home, with professionals asking, “Where should they be?” (Louise, FNA professional).³

The Empowerment Concept

A definition of ‘empowerment’ for this research was constructed in Chapter Four. Empowerment was conceptualised as both process and outcome—working at both micro and macro levels—in reference to professional-client interactions. Table B from page 60 is repeated here:

Table B: A Definition of ‘Empowerment’

	Process	Outcome
Micro	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• clients’ involvement in all stages of process• at least an equal partnership between professionals and clients• at most clients have greater control than professionals, in client-professional interactions• focus on abilities and solutions rather than disabilities and deficits (Gibson 1991, p.355)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• clients have a “<i>positive self concept, personal satisfaction, self-efficacy, a sense of mastery, a sense of connectedness, self-development, a feeling of hope, social justice ... and improved quality of life</i>” (Gibson 1991, p.359)• clients have access to opportunities that facilitate their participation in general society• clients gain/ retain control of their services and way of living
Macro	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• clients, and possibly professionals, work to create increased “<i>policies and conditions which do enable people to gain control of their lives</i>” (Cowen 1991, p.407)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the creation of structures and opportunities that enable clients to control their lives

³While M. Hubbard’s 1992 thesis was read only after this conclusion was drafted, her own characterisation of the FNAs was remarkably similar (see pages 34-37).

The empowerment concept centralises the disabled people in any consideration of services and professionals' interactions. The concept has been used to encourage changes in working with clients—changes suggested by disabled people's strong criticisms. Given my agreement with many of these critiques (Tisdall 1990), the empowerment concept is an useful tool with which to evaluate Kirp's policy frameworks for inter-disciplinary collaboration.

How potentially empowering were the policy frameworks of the FNA and EV meetings for the young people?

Empowerment and the Political Framework

As argued in Chapter Four, the extent of 'empowerment' within the political framework does logically depend on the young people's political influence and strength. If the young people are not powerfully politically, then the macro outcome of expanded opportunities might not be realised. On the other hand, even with little power, the political process can empower young people in the practice of advocacy. The process can be empowering at a micro level for young people (e.g. focusing on solutions, young people having control of the process) and at a macro level (e.g. the process can try to create more opportunities). The outcome can be empowering on the micro level as well: the political process can provide the opportunity for young people to take control of their lives and opportunities and thus gain, for example, a 'sense of mastery' and 'self-efficacy'.

In practice, the EV meetings appeared more influenced by a political framework than the FNA meetings. Disabled people's political fight against exclusion and criticism of services may have created a political context that influenced the EV meetings. In several ways, the EV young people were centralised in the assessments and meetings. For example, the assessments' content and recommendations were largely directed by what young people wanted. Attempts were made in the EV meetings to ensure that young people felt comfortable and included. EV young people largely had control of what happened as a result of the meetings: they were responsible for implementing most recommendations. Young people's possible empowerment by these aspects of the EV meetings is particularly apparent when the practices are compared to those of the FNA meetings.

Within the FNA meetings, young people were asked what they wanted. The Specialist Careers Officers sometimes made their reports on the

basis of what young people had said to them in previous interviews. Young people's views, however, were open to professional evaluation. When young people's views were considered 'realistic', then they were largely discussed and attempts made to operationalize them. Young people felt listened to and empowered in these instances. When young people's views were considered 'unrealistic', however, than the meetings tended to be tension-filled and the views were not operationalized. Young people felt side-lined and distressed after these meetings. Professional opinions thus typically prevailed over young people's stated preferences. In contrast, Val Trudeau has specifically stated in her EV assessment that she wished to change her education. This wish became the primary focus of the majority of her assessments, and the resulting recommendations. Val Trudeau was delighted that the EV professionals had supported her wish for change, and that actual change was likely to occur. EV young people's wishes tended to be the **basis** for their assessments; FNA young people's wishes tended to be **consulted**. Both approaches could result in empowering experiences and outcomes for the young people. But the FNA professional participants' approach displayed a greater propensity to make young people feel excluded by the dominance of professional expertise, than the EVs' approach, which provided young people's views with a more foundational role.

The FNA meetings displayed certain repeated practices that made young people feel both marginalised and uncomfortable. Young people tended to be discussed in the third person, particularly when professionals gave reports. One young person complained about her and her family's marginalisation:

I thought it was a pure waste of time we come, 'cause they [the professional participants] were just speaking amongst themselves.

The professional reports often contained direct criticism of the young people, which young people reported as making them uncomfortable and, for some young people, unwilling to speak. In contrast, the EV professionals directed their reports to the young people within the full meetings. EV professionals arguably tried to create comfortable settings through a variety of measures: diverting criticism of young people; trying to resurrect past relationships with the young people; and describing the past assessments and present meetings in casual terms. EV professionals predominantly phrased their reports in terms of young people's abilities and de-emphasised areas of difficulty. Such

measures could be seen as respecting young people's control over their own lives, putting professional expertise in the service of the young people, and promoting positive approaches. All EV young people did feel their wishes and views were heard within their meetings.

The FNA meetings rarely left decisions to be implemented by the young people. FNA young people and parents did have certain veto powers. They could have said they were unhappy with the meetings' decisions. Yet, most young people and parents felt unable to contradict decisions at their meetings, even when highly dissatisfied. Parents could have disagreed with the Education Authority's eventual letter but records could not be found of such letters up to six months after the observed FNA2 meetings were held. Other FNA2 letters (from meetings not observed) appeared so vague as to have little substance with which to disagree. Whatever the letters' contents and timeliness, young people had no corresponding right to receive these letters. FNA young people and their parents had little responsibility for decisions, and were arguably not empowered—or even actively disempowered—by this lack of responsibility. Like the FNA young people, EV young people had the opportunity to disagree with meetings' recommendations within the meetings. They rarely took this opportunity. Young people were, however, responsible for implementing almost all meetings' recommendations—as Val Trudeau said after her meeting: *"Can't do it without me."* Unlike the FNA young people, EV young people did all receive written material from the meeting. The material was sent to the young people, and not to their parents. As a micro process, certain FNA practices failed to empower (if not actively disempower) young people, while contrasting EV practices did appear more empowering for young people.

The political context created by the disability advocacy movement possibly influenced the EV meetings: to centralise the young people and their wants, and thus to provide a possibly empowering process and outcome at a micro level. At a macro level, though, both types of meetings focused on individual young people and rarely addressed or challenged the opportunities available to them. Val Trudeau's and Gillian Stone's meetings were possible exceptions but even these challenges were addressed in terms of the individual young people. Neither exception challenged the policy and opportunities for young people generally.

Empowerment and the Legalistic Framework

As suggested in Chapter Four, legislated rights could be seen as potentially empowering to young people and their parents. The process of fighting for one's rights could be empowering at both micro and macro levels, and result in empowering outcomes at both levels as well. The possibility of legal recourse could empower the clients, giving them greater than or equal power to professionals in the micro process.

The EV meetings were a voluntary service to which young people had no right (as access was decided by the team, on referral from a physician)⁴. Only the FNA meetings were required by legislation. While the relevant FNA legislation guaranteed young people certain rights, the legislation appeared only successful in delivering half of the guarantees. No appeals were known based on FNA rights. If guaranteed rights were factors in young people's empowerment, the legal framework for the FNA meetings did not appear to empower young people significantly in this way.

Legislation cannot only enshrine rights, but assign duties and constraints. Duties, for example, can ensure that young people and parents have supportive services and that opportunities exist. Constraints can prevent discriminatory practices against disabled people, thus opening up accessible opportunities and structures. The legal framework for the FNA meetings applied duties to Local Authorities, to ensure that particular reports and decisions were made for the young people when they were leaving school. While the general duties to have the meetings were held to, the details of the duties (i.e., particular reports) were not always fulfilled.

Having legal rights and duties, then, appeared not enough to guarantee young people's empowerment. The legal rights and duties must be fulfilled and/ or have the possibility of legal appeal and enforcement, to empower young people.

Empowerment and the Bureaucratic Framework

Similar to legal rights and duties, bureaucratic rules and regulations can provide the basis for claims and appeals. Bureaucratic rules and regulations can require that all four boxes of Table B (see page 265) are operationalised, thus creating a structure that facilitates young people's empowerment. On the

⁴The possible influence of Canada's legalistic context of anti-discrimination has been addressed in the previous section.

other hand, the bureaucratic framework's reliance on "*consistency and internal accountability*" (Kirp 1982, p.138) can work against young people's empowerment. Rules can predominate over individual clients' views and control, and potentially work against change. In the case of the FNA meetings, the bureaucratic framework appeared to support the meetings' bureaucratic routines at the expense of marginalising the young people.

The FNA meetings demonstrated the possibly 'unintended consequences' of following bureaucratic rules. For example, Robertson School was given a particular date by the Education Authority on which to hold all legally required FNA meetings. Participants had little choice about the timing of the meetings. If they were unable to attend, they had to wait from three to six months until the next set of meetings. In order to fulfil the bureaucratic-legal requirements, Robertson School scheduled each FNA meeting ten to twenty minutes apart. All types of participants—professionals, young people and parents—complained about this short time, which was said to lead to little exploration of possibilities, lack of comfort for young people and parents, and an 'assembly line approach'. The FNA bureaucratic requirements thus led to both a disempowering micro process and outcome. The EV meetings, in contrast, were not constrained by such bureaucratic requirements. The team could schedule meetings for as long as deemed needed, and were first made at the EV team members' convenience and then checked with the young people and parents for their convenience. The EV meetings did not appear constrained by the time, and typically ran for over one hour (the team meeting and the full meeting each taking over 30 minutes).

The FNA meetings' 'assembly-line approach' applied the same pattern to every meeting. The same two options were typically discussed within each meeting—staying at school or going to Further Education (FE) college—whether or not they appeared appropriate for what the young people wanted (for example, FE college appeared incongruous within a discussion of Gillian Stone's desire to work with horses). Young people's and parents' questions that did not fit the pattern were typically not addressed within the meetings. Certain FNA young people and parents were irate at their lack of involvement with the meetings and the sidelining of their comments. Arguably, the 'assembly line approach' was more dedicated to maintaining the smooth processing of the assembly line than focusing on the clients, their questions and agendas, and their empowerment. The EV meetings were able to avoid this 'assembly line approach', at least partially because they were not tightly

constrained by time. The EV meetings did not adhere as closely as the FNA meetings to a particular pattern. The EV meetings were arguably able to concentrate on the young people's individual issues, and thus were able to create a more empowering micro process and outcome for individual young people.

The FNA's bureaucratic framework did not encourage any participant to take responsibility for the meetings' quality. In this way, the framework disempowered all participants—professionals, young people and parents—as they did not feel in control of the process. The EV team members, on the other hand, clearly felt responsible for the EV meetings. The FNAs' bureaucratic framework might address macro empowerment if rules and regulations required community opportunities to be examined and challenged. Such rules and regulations were not evident within the FNA meetings' guidelines.

Within the context of the FNA meetings, the bureaucratic framework appeared actively to discourage young people's empowerment, as well as that of other participants.

Empowerment and the Professional Framework

Chapter Four suggests that the professional framework may place professional expertise in the service of the clients. Professionals may consider it 'good practice' to involve clients at all stages of the process, to work in partnership with the clients and otherwise fulfil the micro-components of the empowerment process and outcome (see page 265 for suggested components). Professionals may work together with their clients to create structures and opportunities that enable the clients to gain control of their lives. The professional framework may provide clients with the tools and the expertise by which to empower themselves.

The professional framework does, however, provide the possibility that professional expertise will dominate, and exclude, clients' opinions and involvement. 'Professionalism' may disempower most clients because the clients' knowledge is demeaned in favour of the professionals' knowledge base. Clients may feel unable to disagree with professional expertise, and clients may passively accept the parentalistic decisions of professionals. (See Fulcher 1989, p.261.) The pre- and post-meeting discussions without the young people and parents could be seen as examples of professionalism and exclusion of clients. Certain young people and parents asserted that they felt decisions had been made before they entered the FNA meetings. Certain

young people and parents expressed discomfort at being discussed before they entered; they felt actively discouraged from participating due to embarrassment. One professional described the effect of discussions without the young people and parents: *"It does enforce the 'them versus us' scenario. You know? ... It's not an equal partnership thing."* Having discussions without young people and parents might fit into professional good practice; such discussions, however, did not appear to be empowering in terms of either micro processes or outcomes for the FNA young people and parents. (For discussion of pre-meetings, see pages 280-281.)

The discourse at times displayed the potential tension between wishing to include young people and the professional nature of the FNA meetings. The FNA guidelines clearly set out professionals as the decision makers, who must consult young people and parents, but not necessarily listen to their responses. In practice, young people and parents were arguably not 'partners' in setting the FNA meetings' agendas, in making or implementing decisions (see pages 260-262). A variety of observations demonstrated that young people's involvement within the meetings was at risk and often lacking: for example, the young people's limited level of involvement observed within the meetings, and participants' frequent judging of the success or failure of meetings by the criterion of young people's involvement.

The EV meetings appeared to incorporate young people's views to a greater extent. What young people stated within the initial assessments was often the basis for the professionals' recommendations. In this way, professional expertise could be used in the service of young people, which could result in empowering processes and outcomes (for further discussion, see pages 259-260).

Outside professionals were concerned that the EV meetings would lower young people's self-esteem and self-efficacy. They raised the oppressive atmosphere created by so many professionals, the difficulty of hearing sensitive information in front of such a large group and the insensitive reporting of 'disabilities'. In practice, the young people and parents did not report any of these concerns. Certain young people and parents in fact were impressed by the professionals' sensitivity and focus on abilities (Val Trudeau, for example). One parent did report feeling cornered by the professionals over a particular recommendation, and unable to continue her disagreement. Overall, though, young people's self-esteem and self-efficacy did not appear negatively affected by the meetings.

Outside professionals did raise a potentially disempowering aspect of the EV meetings that did seem to affect the young people and parents. A large amount of verbal information was provided at the meetings, with the promise of extensive minutes to be mailed out to the young people and parents. While presumably understandable to professionals, this information was largely an inaccessible communication mode for many of the young people and parents. Young people and parents did not significantly interact with the information at the meetings. They could remember few of the recommendations after the meetings. In this way, young people and parents were arguably not empowered, or even actively disempowered, by the expression of professional expertise.

Professionals may use their expertise within groups—for example, in group counselling or informational meetings or perhaps within the EV and FNA meetings themselves—in ways that may lead to group action on policies and conditions. Such a possibility was largely untapped within the FNA and EV meetings. Within the EV meetings, the focus lay on the assessments of the individual young people and their abilities for the future. Within the FNA meetings, the focus divided between reports on the individual young people and deciding their future provision. Rarely was the dearth of opportunities for certain young people addressed within the meetings. For example, one young person was told at his FNA meeting he would not be able to attend a special needs Further Education course because he had mobility as well as learning difficulties. No one raised the possibility that either the existing course should be modified or another course developed. Certain FNA participants did perceive the meetings as a forum from which future planning could emerge. While the FNA meetings might arguably influence future action, little evidence was found within the FNA meetings of a commitment to altering the post-school environments for young people. Instead, young people's wishes for their futures were assessed and evaluated by professionals on what was 'realistic'.

Certain exceptions to the overall individualisation could be found. Within the FNA meetings, Clive's insistence on changing the exam environment for Gillian Stone appeared to alleviate another professional's criticism of Gillian Stone as "*slow*". Gillian Stone did note the 'slow' criticism, but overall was delighted with her meeting. Such 'socialisation' of the problem could be contrasted with Michael Smith's meeting, where individualised criticism of him was allowed to stand. Michael Smith was

devastated by the criticism. Young people did seem to notice individualised criticism, which did not add to their self-esteem and arguably disempowered them. Potentially, recasting the individualised criticism onto the environment successfully ameliorated the damage to young people's self-esteem. Within the EV meetings, Val Trudeau's meeting was notable in its positive support of Val Trudeau as an individual and the focus on changing her school environment. After the meeting, Val Trudeau and Mrs Trudeau expressed their delight at the positive assessments. Val Trudeau saw herself in control of her future education and appeared delighted by this control. The focus on her abilities and changing the educational environment seemed to improve significantly Val Trudeau's self-esteem and self-efficacy, thus potentially empowering her.

The individualisation of the transitional problem did appear to have positive and empowering effects for the young people. Instead of being ignored and 'dropped' once they left school, the young people were the focus of considerable professional attention and recommendations/ decisions. Certain young people felt their wishes were acted upon and were buoyed by the positive evaluations of professionals.

The individualisation of the transitional problem did appear also to have possibly negative, and disempowering, effects for the young people. The individualisation often slipped into criticism of the young people within the FNAs, which lowered their self-esteem. Disempowering criticism of young people was not an obvious problem with the EV meetings. Rather, the focus on the individual young people seemed to result in little action. In almost all EV and FNA meetings, the young people were expected to change and adapt, and not their environments and the range of opportunities.

Empowerment and the EV and FNA Meetings' Policy Frameworks

The predominant professional and bureaucratic frameworks of the inter-disciplinary meetings observed were more likely to work **against** the young people's empowerment than to forward it.⁵

Such disempowerment did not seem an inevitable product of the professional and bureaucratic frameworks. Professional expertise can be put in

⁵Again, a conclusion similarly made about the FNA meetings by M. Hubbard (1992) (see page 34).

the service of the young people, and bureaucracy can institute rules and regulations that create a more empowering structure for the young people. But the mountain of articles and books critiquing professional and bureaucratic services for disabled people indicate the frequency over time and place that the two frameworks have worked against empowering their clients. One only has to talk to a handful of disabled people and their carers who have been through professional and bureaucratic services, and one will hear the depth of many people's distrust and anger (For examples, see Oliver 1991b and Tisdall 1990). Disabled people have frequently been unable to gain professional and bureaucratic expertise and control because of discrimination in education, employment and other opportunities. Both professionals and bureaucrats rely on modes of communication and thinking which can be particularly inaccessible to certain disabled people. Professional and bureaucratic expertise has been used consistently and constantly to provide professionals and bureaucrats with greater power than their clients. With the weight of this past and current practice, altering professional and bureaucratic frameworks to empower their clients requires considerable change.

My Reflections on Fieldwork and Theory

The research had the typical limitations of a case study approach. A limited number of meetings constituted the fieldwork data. How representative were the fieldwork meetings of each type? How representative were the meetings of inter-disciplinary collaboration in general? The research also had the typical limitations of a comparative study. Could the two different meeting types be compared: i.e., were there enough similarities between the two to justify a comparison? In particular, the 'transitional problem' was perceived as largely similar between the two locations—a debatable (if perhaps justifiable) perception.

The research was also limited by structural constraints of the research design. Due to the limited financing and time of the Ph.D. project, fieldwork had to take place within a year. Long-term follow-up from the meetings could not be undertaken, despite the obvious research question of how these meetings actually affected young people's transition. Professionals and parents could not logistically be interviewed before and after each meeting—

as were the young people—because the Scottish FNA meetings were held one after each other on a single day. Given an ideal world, meetings would have been video-taped, more follow-up interviews with participants carried out over particular data interpretations, and all participants interviewed before and after the meetings. (See Chapter 2 for further exploration of research constraints.)

Doing comparative fieldwork in two countries as far apart as Scotland and Canada had obvious logistical difficulties. Communication and collaboration at a distance were hampered. My travel plans were somewhat inflexible, as I had to co-ordinate two schedules of meetings. When the full number of proposed meetings did not take place during my three months in Sheldon, I had to return because another set of FNA meetings was taking place. I was thus reliant on the EV team leader to interview young people and parents, and to audio-tape four meetings; without the team leader's substantial efforts for this research, the fieldwork would have been disastrously incomplete. While the team leader's interaction with young people and parents in questionnaires provided interesting insights, I had the comparative information from talking with the FNA young people and parents, and would have liked the opportunity to follow-up certain ideas with the EV young people and parents myself. The distance between the two countries did make co-ordination of fieldwork very difficult and, without the substantial goodwill and efforts of people in both countries, impossible.

As I think is common with most research—even when pilot studies and groundwork are done before formal fieldwork—I discovered areas on which I would have liked more information, when analysing my data. If I were repeating the fieldwork, I would do certain things differently. I would have asked young people's and parents' formal permission to contact them 6 months after their meetings to ask them about decisions'/ recommendations' implementation, whether they had received written material, their reflections at that point on the meetings and my interpretations of them. I would have asked questions to shed more light on the potential tension between the 'assessment' and 'action' models, participants' satisfaction, and the potential conflict between professional and bureaucratic frameworks.

Obvious areas emerged for future research. Research should be done on the effect of meetings' decisions/ recommendations on the young people's lives, and how young people viewed the complete FNA process from a longer-term perspective. Ward et al.'s (1991) research on Scottish young people's

transition had to rely on very vague records of FNA decisions, so that their research cannot substantially link what went on at FNA meetings to what effect the meetings had on young people's lives and satisfaction. Further consideration of how different professionals work together in FNAs, and their reasons for often failing to do so, should be undertaken. A comprehensive and comparative study of FNA practice in all Scotland's authorities should be done, to consider best models of practice within the present legislative structure. Central to such research should be young people and parents, who should state their views and their suggestions for both the research agenda and on the FNAs themselves. In reference to the EV meetings, two important questions need to be answered to evaluate the efficacy of their voluntary nature: who were the young people who did not use the EVs? Do the EVs cater for those who most need the help/ wish to use the service? Research should consider more radically different inter-disciplinary collaborations: Denmark's Kurator model is an obvious possibility.

Neither gender nor variations among professionals' roles were central issues to this research, as the research had been structured around other issues and I perceived more significant issues in the fieldwork data. These issues, however, could be further investigated in this data or, even more appropriately, the focus of other research. I would suggest that further research on inter-disciplinary meetings and young people's involvement consider how well the meetings involve young people with more complex learning difficulties than the young people in this research.

I began this research intending to use discourse analysis as the fundamental epistemological basis. The theory of discourse analysis appeared to capture many of the questions I had about 'transitional problem' setting. I found operationalizing the theory of discourse analysis, however, problematic. The theory in the social sciences is still relatively new and its practice not fully articulated for research that asked questions like mine. Armed with a list of practical questions, I went to several leading discourse analysts in sociology departments in the United States, Ontario and Scotland and usually left being told I was asking good questions, which were presently unanswered. Faced with the time constraints of finishing my Ph.D., I decided to de-emphasise discourse analysis in my analysis of fieldwork and use more familiar methods to consider qualitative data.

Theoretically, I was attracted to Kirp's frameworks because he had already used them in comparing special education policies, with provocative

results. The de-emphasising of discourse analysis meant that these frameworks became a more foundational theoretical structure of this research. When considering the EV and FNA meetings by these frameworks, I quickly discovered limitations in Kirp's definitions. This led to greater consideration of the differences between professional and bureaucratic frameworks, for example. Kirp recognised that each policy framework was value-laden, but himself did not state the basis of his own evaluation of British and United State's frameworks. I thus decided to use the empowerment concept as a means to evaluate Kirp's framework. The empowerment concept had obvious deficits due to its broad use and resultant imprecision. The concept, however, is one used by the disability movement and clearly can place young people in the centre of the evaluation.

Both Kirp and the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) offer provocative insights into the policy settings of special education/transition, but neither appear to have their foundation in practice and young people's views. I began this research expecting it to be a theoretical investigation of the 'transitional problem', informed by practice and most definitely by young people's views. In certain ways, the analysis and conclusions are more evaluative than I had originally intended. Comparative aspects of the meetings highlighted either examples of good or bad practice. Some events within the meetings appeared so worthy of recognition that the evaluative aspect of the research expanded. How could I responsibly consider abstract notions of problem-setting when some young people were in tears after their meetings?

While I have certain doubts about professional and bureaucratic frameworks for the policy setting of the 'transitional problem' (see pages 63 and 271-272), the professional and bureaucratic frameworks are the reality for the young people. Practical changes are readily evident now, which can be made and which would improve the experiences for many young people and their parents. More radical re-thinking is considered within the concluding section.

Good and Bad Practices

The analysis chapters described numerous examples of good and bad practice. Such examples can be divided into three categories: how the meetings were structured, the quality of interactions at the meetings, and the products of the meetings. Clearly, aspects of all three categories affected each other, and the categorisation is only a tool by which to consider alternatives and change.

Structures

Many different aspects of the meetings' structures appeared to affect the practice of the meetings. Here, four aspects are drawn out that were consistently raised by meeting participants and appeared to affect the meetings most:

- 1) Preparation for the meetings;
- 2) The formal set-up of the meetings;
- 3) The timing of the meetings; and
- 4) Whether the meetings were purposeful.

First, preparation was expected to inform both the EV and FNA meetings. For the EV meetings, EV team members assessed the young people and evaluated the results. They constructed reports and recommendations from these results. Through certain assessments, young people and parents were also prepared for the EV meetings. Young people and parents had time to explore their wishes and concerns for their futures; certain EV team members reflected back their recommendations to the young people before the EV meetings. In part, such preparation might have heightened young people's and parents' views that no new information was reported at the meetings. At the same time, their views had been consulted and included within the assessments/ recommendations and they had had the opportunity to explore many of their views with individual EV team members before the meetings.

In contrast, most young people and parents were not prepared for the FNA meetings. Many young people and parents expressed considerable confusion after attending their first FNA meetings. Several reported feeling unprepared and thus unable to participate. When professional reports were prepared for the FNA2 meetings, young people and parents did not receive these reports. They were thus at an informational disadvantage to other

professional participants who did receive the reports. Professionals themselves did not always complete the legally and bureaucratically required reports. If completed, professionals did not always distribute the reports before the meetings to other professionals. Professionals were thus not always prepared with information. Further, the Section 13 social work report was the pathway for young people to access social services. The completion of the social work assessments and reports was a legal right of young people and the failure to complete them disadvantageous to the young people.

These findings suggested at least three changes for the FNA meetings.

- A. Young people and parents should be prepared for all FNA meetings, including the FNA1 meetings. They could be prepared in one-to-one interactions, as within the EV assessments. Group sessions are another alternative (as are already in place in a particular Scottish area). Young people and parents could be invited to a series of professionally-led seminars, which discuss issues about post-school transition. A third option is advocacy work, within peer groups. Young people would meet together to prepare for and to discuss the Future Needs Assessments. Representatives of the adult disability movement might be particularly appropriate to facilitate such groups, with the informational support of professionals.
- B. Young people and parents should not be excluded from the information exchange. If reports go to other professionals, then surely the reports should go to young people and parents as well. Symbolically, such inclusion insists that young people and parents be treated as part of the 'inter-disciplinary team'. Practically, such information would prevent young people and parents being at a potential informational disadvantage to the professional participants.
- C. The professional reports were supposed to be the basis of the FNA2 meetings. The failures to produce and distribute such reports left lacunae in the FNA2 meetings' informational base and young people's (parents') rights. The requirements for professional reports must be kept. Young people and parents should have the opportunity and support to write their own reports for the FNA meetings, to distribute them in advance, and present them at the meetings.

Second, some participants criticised the formal set-up of the meetings. In both types of meetings, the young person and parent(s) entered a room where the professionals were already present. The professionals were typically already seated around tables. The EV professionals would have already had their team meeting about the young person; the FNA professionals might have been discussing the outgoing or incoming young person. Certain professionals at both EV and FNA meetings worried about the potential intimidation of these arrangements. The young people and parents were

significantly outnumbered by professionals; they had to 'run the gauntlet' as they moved from the door to be seated. The number of professionals present was cited as intimidating for the young people and parents, heightening their discomfort. The unofficial pre- or post-discussion was described as creating a 'them versus us' scenario by one FNA professional.

Only in the FNA meetings, however, was the formal set-up criticised by participants after particular meetings. EV young people and parents expressed no concern at the number of people present at the EV meetings, even when I directly asked them. The young people and parents described only a positive atmosphere of concerned and interested professionals, despite the potential intimidation of the preceding team meeting and the often formal seating arrangements. Such findings suggest that the formal set-up of the interdisciplinary meetings need not be intimidating. Possible intimidation can be avoided by particular actions by the professionals. For example, the EV professionals were open about their team meetings to the young people and parents whereas the FNA professionals had such discussions covertly (sometimes resulting in a heavy silence when the conversation abruptly stopped as the next young person and parent entered the room). This suggests that, if pre- or post-meetings are held, they should be held openly.

One young person described two professionals 'staring at her' and saying nothing during her FNA meeting. She was very uncomfortable at this perusal. When she identified these professionals by their seating, I realised that these two professionals were not involved with the young person—they were waiting for the next meeting. No 'extra' professionals attended the EV meetings. Young people and parents only expressed considerable comfort with the interest shown by all professionals present. This suggests that only professionals involved with the young people should attend meetings, or that 'extra' professionals' presence should be handled more sensitively and openly.

Two FNA meetings seemed to create comfortable atmospheres for the young people and parents by including the young people and parents in the professionals' coffee breaks. In one case, the informal break allowed the young person to confide her nervousness to an adjacent professional. During the following meeting, that professional often acted as an interpreter and supporter of the young person. A more informal component of the meetings, to allow young people and parents to settle into the group and informally talk with professionals, might have heightened other young people's and parents'

inclusion within the meetings. An assigned advocate—someone who can make others listen—for young people might increase their comfort and involvement.

No EV participant commented on the formal chair-table organisation of most meetings. One particular set-up, however, could be seen as more inclusive: a circle of chairs rather than a T-shaped table surrounded by chairs. Such a potentially inclusive set-up could be contrasted with the FNA seating arrangements. Several young people and parents spoke of sitting at the “*bottom of the table*”, with the meetings’ chairperson at the “*head*”. One professional described the set up as a “*trial by horseshoe*”. Possibly, the circular arrangement of the one EV meeting, with comfortable chairs instead of table seating, would be the most inclusive and comfortable for the majority of young people and parents (remembering that young people particularly may require particular types of chairs to suit their physical disability).

Third, the timing of the meetings caused considerable consternation amongst FNA meeting participants. The ten to twenty minutes (necessitated in part by bureaucratic and legal requirements) were deemed as too short for young people and parents to be made comfortable, let alone for productive and substantial decisions to be discussed and made.

Several young people and parents felt considerably rushed by this scheduling. They left the FNA meetings confused about what had occurred, and how decisions could be made in such a short time. One parent complained of making the effort to come to the FNA meeting, only for it to last ten minutes. (For further discussion about the effects of time-constraints, see pages 263 and 270) The EV meetings, in contrast, had a much more leisurely timetable, which was flexible to the particular meeting. Both the team meetings and following meetings were always at least 30 minutes each. No sense of hurry was noted within the meetings’ interactions, or by meeting participants.

In comparing the two meetings, the FNAs’ tight scheduling appeared to detract from the extent of meetings’ interactions and decisions. The EV meetings demonstrated a more relaxed schedule that allowed for more comprehensive and perhaps more comfortable meetings. The comparison underlined that FNA meetings could benefit from having considerably more time dedicated to each one.

Fourth, participants talked of certain meetings’ failure to be purposeful. In the case of the EV meetings, some participants complained of

the lack of action resulting from the meetings—even though the meetings did not officially promise action (see Chapter Two). Most of the young people and parents, said certain participants, already knew most of the information given at the meetings; what help were all the recommendations when no actual opportunities were made available?

Such practical action might be more likely at the EV meetings if community agencies' representatives attended (particularly agencies with whom the young people might work in the future). The FNA meetings, in contrast, did have Further Education (FE) college and specialist careers office representatives involved in the meetings, and the social work department representative was invited. Access to FE college and to social work department services were possible results from the FNA meetings. To be useful for the young people, the inter-disciplinary meetings must include future community agency representatives who are 'gatekeepers' to actual opportunities.

While a complement of future community agency representatives was present at the FNA meetings, the meetings tended constantly to repeat the same two options: staying at school and going to FE college. The meetings did not tend to review previous decisions, thus failing to fulfil their potential for 'follow-up' and development of decisions. One young woman described the FNA meetings, after attending her fourth one: "*Nothing much happens. They just always make the same decisions.*" Young people and parents were particularly confused after attending their FNA1 meetings: why were post-school options being considered when the young person was years away from leaving school?

The EV meetings were voluntary events that were held for a particular purpose: a young person was leaving school, or an intensive assessment was requested so that the young person could make some important educational-vocational decisions. The meetings were held according to young people's apparent 'need' and/ or their requests. Participants were therefore not confused about why the meeting was being held (although they might have differing expectations of what would result). The voluntary aspect of the EV meetings allowed them to escape the seeming purposelessness of holding meetings according to legal requirements.

The transitional literature actively supports continued inter-disciplinary meetings from the age of thirteen plus (for example, see Madden 1990, p.107 and McGinty & Fish 1992, p.35). FNA meetings met this recommendation

whereas EV meetings did not. FNA meetings, however, did not fulfil the agenda that the early start was supposed to provide: continual progression and refinement of decisions over time, through continual 'transitional' meetings. Rather, participants continuously made the same decisions between staying at school or going to FE college. The FNA participants could make better use of the FNAs' early start and opportunities for continual review. They could begin in early FNA meetings to explore various educational, work and community experiences. These meetings' decisions could evolve to inform more concrete post-school choices and plans as the young people actually prepare to leave school.

Interactions

Good and bad practices were particularly evident in two areas: how professionals' interactions with young people affected their comfort and involvement, and how decisions/ recommendations were made.

First, young people's involvement seemed affected by professionals' actions. Within the FNA meetings, professional participants were often startled by young people's goals. Perceived 'realism' was a critical issue, which could lead to positive and productive interactions but also to devastating ones for the young people/ parents. If all young people had discussed their opinions with the FNA professionals before the meetings—as the young people did with the EV team members—then perhaps the 'realism' of young people's views would have already been discussed (in less intimidating, one-to-one discussions). Participants would have had an opportunity to consider the 'realism' of young people's views, and be prepared for them within the meetings.

Productive handling of 'realism' may be affected by professionals selecting positive discourse. (See pages 133-135, 244-246 and 266-267). The EV team members did not confront young people's 'realism' in any of the observed meetings. Instead, they consistently talked in terms of young people's abilities. The EV team members all cited a conscious effort to do so, and in practice overwhelmingly did. Whether or not 'realism' should be addressed at the FNA meetings was a much-debated point amongst professional participants. But if 'realism' is to be addressed, directly confronting 'unrealistic' goals should be avoided—the negative repercussions of John Mitchell's meeting suggest that (see pages 131-132). Instead, opportunities should be suggested in which the young person can

test the goal's 'realism' for her/himself, and/ or other goals in addition to the young person's suggestions—as they were in Gillian Stone's meeting (see pages 223-224). Problems with 'realism' were not infrequent in the FNA meetings. FNA professionals should be prepared individually, and as a group, to deal positively with young people's views that they may perceive as 'unrealistic'. Further, FNA professionals should challenge themselves—and be challenged, for example, by disability awareness training by disabled people themselves—on what they consider to be 'realistic' options.

Rather than focusing on the young people's present problems as the FNA reports tended to do, the EV assessments were initially undertaken and interpreted in terms of young people's abilities for the futures. In this way, the EV team members rarely criticised young people—and if they did, one team member always diverted the criticism—and typically described only young people's abilities in direct reference to their futures. The EV meetings' success in making young people and parents feel that strengths and weaknesses were positively assessed suggests alternatives for the FNA meetings. The FNA professional participants should present reports based on young people's abilities in reference to the young people's futures, rather than focusing on present failures or disabilities.

The young people were centralised within the EV meetings. All introductions and reports were directed to the young people, and almost every EV team member sought to make connections with the young people before reporting the assessment findings/ recommendations. Findings and recommendations were typically described in terms of what young people had said and done within the assessments. In contrast, the young people were usually talked **about** within the FNA meetings. Reports were phrased in the third-person. Young people's views were consistently consulted within the FNA meetings, but their views were subject to professional scrutiny within the meetings. Some FNA young people and parents did report after their meetings that they had felt marginalised. The EV meetings' style of interaction suggests possible alterations to FNA meetings' discourse and construction of professional reports, in order to create a more inclusive atmosphere for the young people.

Second, the meetings did not follow systematic patterns of decision-making. While certain research has argued that rational, consensual decision-making does not reflect reality, the attempt to follow such a structure is advocated by the transitional literature (see, for example, CERI 1991; Elliott &

Sheridan, 1992; McGinty & Fish, 1992). Elliott and Sheridan list three decision-making steps relevant to the meetings' interactions: brain-storming for alternative solutions; choosing amongst alternatives; and obtaining consensus of the team (1992 p. 328). These steps cannot **guarantee** that all participants are included and that options are evaluated and then selected, but the steps can **encourage** involvement and discussion when a meeting's agenda is organised to follow such steps.

While examples of all three steps could be seen within both meeting types, the steps were not consistently followed. Proportionally, extremely little time was spent within any meeting in brain-storming for alternative solutions. The benefits and dis-benefits between alternatives were not always explored, and more rarely summarised before decisions/ recommendations were made. In both meetings, participants were asked by the chairperson if they 'wanted to raise anything else', or 'if they were satisfied' or 'happy'. But a concise and precise summary of what had been decided was often not provided. Did participants (particularly young people and parents) know the decisions so that they could either disagree or agree with them? The lack of consensus on participants' listing of recommendations, after each meeting, suggested that participants did not have a comprehensive grasp of what decisions/ recommendations had been made. Both types of meetings would benefit from outlining and using clear agendas, which incorporate all three steps with sufficient time attributed to each.

Results

FNA's decisions covered a much smaller range of issues than EV's recommendations. The FNA meetings typically made decisions repeatedly between staying at school and attending FE college. Occasionally, work experience was raised but rarely any other potential transitional issue. EV recommendations covered not only education and work experience, but housing, recreation, transportation, emotional well-being and more. The EVs' wider scope matched the call by the transition literature to consider the transition from school to 'adulthood' widely (see pages 156-157 for references). All these different areas in themselves are important for 'adulthood', but also the different areas can be dependent upon one another. For example, if young people cannot travel to training then they are not able to attend, whatever their qualifications and financing. If the inter-disciplinary meetings set out to address the transition from school to 'adulthood', then the

EV meetings' wider conceptualisation of this transition is more thorough and helpful.

No matter the range of decisions/ recommendations, if neither decisions nor recommendations were implemented then the meetings resulted in having little effect on the 'transitional problem'. Follow-up was particularly problematic for both types of meetings, for at least two reasons.

First, neither meeting type consistently ended with a concise and specific summary of decisions/ recommendations. Most participants left the meetings without clear, comprehensive knowledge of what decisions/ recommendations were made, who was responsible for them, and when they would be implemented. When summaries were provided, participants did display greater consensus on what decisions/ recommendations were made.

The EV meetings' minutes were sent out to young people and parents. A common record was thus created and distributed to all participants. At times, the record was less specific than, or inconsistent with, what was discussed within the meeting; nevertheless, the record did state the majority of recommendations in writing. The FNA meetings, on the other hand, did not regularly have minutes (one professional took it upon herself to write and distribute a meeting minute, but this was an exception). Professionals did tend to write down different decisions in their file notes, and at times even contradictory ones. No common record was created clearly distributing responsibility and time tables.

Second, review of decisions was in doubt. The FNA meetings observed did not overtly review past decisions. The fate of the EV follow-up meetings was unknown, but certain EV team members suggested that such meetings were insufficient to realise recommendations. According to EV team members, more active follow-up was required by team members and possibly more 'motivation' of young people.

While potentially leading to inaction, EV young people were often responsible for implementing recommendations. Such responsibilities respected young people's control and their independence. After all, the lack of implementation could reflect young people's lack of interest and disagreement with recommendations, as well as a lack of 'motivation'. The EV meetings thus suggest changes in FNAs' practice. The FNA participants should discuss what decisions young people might want to implement. Insurance that decisions are carried through could be guaranteed by proper

follow-up after the meetings and not just professional **responsibility** for decisions.

The perceived problems of follow-up in the two meeting types suggest particular changes. As Johnson et al. (1987) suggest, one professional participant should be named responsible for short-term follow up with the young people and other participants immediately following the meeting. Concise and specific summaries should be made by the chairperson at the end of every meeting. Given the number of recommendations at the EV meetings, key and overarching recommendations (versus information) could be decided in the team meeting and presented at the end of the full meetings. Both time frames and people responsible for implementation should be discussed in the full meetings, assigned, and a record of these kept in meetings' minutes. From the second FNA meeting on, every FNA meeting should have an agenda item to review past meetings' decisions. The decisions should be re-stated, progress reported and an evaluation made.

Colburne Region has recently produced a pro forma educational psychologists will complete for every FNA meeting. The pro forma will be sent to participants, including parents (but not young people). It has spaces for decisions to be ticked off/ listed, people responsible for decisions to be noted, and timetables to be set. If the FNA meetings adapted to the pro forma, it could provide a fairly complete record of the meetings. If the FNA meetings did not adapt, the pro forma would represent the educational psychologists' interpretation rather than a clear overall record—at the observed meetings, these components of decision-making were not consistently followed.

Paradoxes

Both types of meetings could quickly alter some of their bad practices and incorporate examples of good practice. For example, changing the seating arrangements would not require substantially more resources. Other aspects would require greater commitment from participants, and possibly more resources. For example, increased FNA preparation for young people and parents would probably require more professional resources (although other resources—including young people, parents and the disability advocacy movement—could also be used). Such changes and re-thinking could be made with more or less difficulty. Certain paradoxes, however, seem difficult to dissolve.

First, advantages and disadvantages could be perceived for the different institutional settings. FNA young people could easily attend meetings held in their school. The educational system brought together not only the educationalists presently working with the young people, but members of the educational system who might work with the young people in the future (representatives from the FE college(s) and Careers Service and the Social Work Department). In this way, professional participants were present who could provide not only assessment but actual action, both within the present educational and future provision.

The EV meetings were not able to draw in the same number of community actors as the FNA meetings, set as they were within the SRC and the Young Adult and Adolescent team. Present educationalists did attend the meetings but no community agency representatives (beyond the team members). While the EV team members could be professional resources for the young people's futures, they were not the 'gate-keepers' to actual jobs, housing, financial benefits, etc.

On the other hand, the EV team members had worked together over time as a team. They were all employed by the SRC, and had certain hours they were contracted to contribute to the team. Their allegiances to the team were clear, and no inter-disciplinary, inter-agency rivalry was observed nor reported. In contrast, the FNA professional participants did not work as a cohesive group. Certain participants noted inter-disciplinary rivalries. The observed meetings displayed less overt inter-disciplinary conflict than lack of interaction (and hence collaboration) altogether. Substantive exploration of options and decisions was rare. Supposedly consensual decisions were likely at risk. One professional indicated that she acted independently of what the FNA meetings decided, if she disagreed with the decisions. Possibly because they were less cohesive as a team, the FNA professional participants were less able to focus on making young people and parents comfortable. A FNA professional indicated an immense need for the professional participants to undergo team building, and to learn about group dynamics. However, because the young people come from different communities, the professional participants were not always the same in the FNA meetings. How successful would team building be when the team members were not always the same?

Second, a paradox lay between the advantages and disadvantages of universal versus voluntary meetings. On one hand, the voluntary aspect could have made the EV meetings more purposeful. Young people and parents were

presumably participating in the meetings only because they felt they would be useful. The limited number of meetings allowed greater time to be spent on each assessment and meeting—perhaps permitting the wider scope, greater involvement of young people and more thorough assessments. On the other hand, not all Ontarian young people identified as having special needs had such inter-disciplinary meetings available. Not even all young disabled people in Sheldon accessed the meetings. The EV meetings would probably be unable to handle all young disabled people living in the Sheldon area if all young people did request EV meetings.

The relevant Scottish legislation guaranteed that every young person recorded as having special educational needs would have a FNA meeting. Bureaucratic decisions outlined timetables for Colburne Schools to ensure that they fulfilled this legal requirement with the necessary professional personnel. The requirement's universality, however, meant fewer professional resources would be available for each young person compared to the EV meetings. Even if the meetings were not all scheduled to take place within one day in Robertson School, would the professional resources be available to do more thorough assessments and to attend lengthier meetings?

Even if the meetings could be extended in time and more professional resources made available, the legal requirements did require the meetings to take place—whether or not the young people were preparing to leave school—and certain decisions to be made—whether or not they appeared relevant for the young people. The meetings thus did not always seem relevant or purposeful to participants. The bureaucracy resulting from the legal requirements seemed to encourage participants not to take responsibility for the FNA meetings. As a result, few participants perceived themselves as responsible for changing the meetings, despite their heavy criticisms of them.

Third, a paradox lay with the number of meeting participants. Both meeting types often had up to ten professional participants. Such numbers made the resource costs heavy for the meetings (thus perhaps preventing more extensive FNA meetings in terms of scope and time, and more extensive EV meetings in terms of clients). Certain participants described the number of participants as intimidating for young people and parents, limiting their involvement (for discussion, see pages 241-243 and 280-281).

Yet, the concept of inter-disciplinary meetings requires the bringing together of present and future actors, to collaborate on and co-ordinate young people's transition. A range of professionals would be required to represent

the various agencies and professional disciplines. Even if meetings were kept to only professionals working now or in the future with the young people, professional participants would still significantly outnumber the young people and their parents.

While a variety of ways to improve the FNA and EV inter-disciplinary meetings were suggested by the findings and analysis, the paradoxes listed above—with their incumbent advantages and disadvantages—appeared unresolvable. Is it better to have a cohesive team or more community agency representatives? Is it better to hold meetings for every young disabled person or to have lengthier, more thorough, assessments for fewer young people? Is it better to include all people involved with the young people, now and in the future, or to limit the professional numbers so as not to intimidate the young people and their parents? (Table T outlines the strengths and weaknesses I perceived of the EVs' and FNAs' approaches to the 'transitional problem'. See next four pages)

But debating these paradoxes may miss a more fundamental question. Do we have to accept inter-disciplinary meetings, in their interpretations of the 'transitional problem' and their particular ways of addressing it?

Table T: Some Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of EVs and FNAs Approaches

	Educational-Vocational (EVs) Meetings		Future Needs Assessment (FNAs) Meetings	
	Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
Policy Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • due to smaller number of clients, more in-depth and extensive assessments and meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in terms of recommendations - in length of meetings (full meeting at least 30 minutes long) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • localised service not available to people outwith Sheldon area • narrow coverage of potential Sheldon client population • young people no right to EVs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service for all young people with a Record of SEN, irrespective of locality • young people had legal rights to FNAs and to particular assessment reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by having such wide coverage, FNAs did not provide in-depth or extensive service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in terms of decisions - in length of meetings (usually between 5-10 minutes)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purposeful—in theory, young people chose to have EVs • EV team members took responsibility for the quality of the meetings • collaborative work between EV team members 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • certain professionals perceived FNAs as a bureaucratic exercise and did not take responsibility for perceived failures
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unable to require outside community agency representatives to attend—thus could not offer ‘action’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • through legislation, regulations and guidelines, could require relevant community agency representatives to attend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little collaborative work evident between professionals, and sometimes suggestion of non-cooperation

Educational-Vocational (EVs) Meetings		Future Needs Assessment (FNAs) Meetings	
	Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people (and parents) prepared for the meetings through assessments • most professionals prepared for meetings (reports; usually met with young people recently; and team meetings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • probably because of assessments with EV team members, young people (and parents) sometimes felt no new information raised in the meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a few young people felt prepared for FNA meetings through interviews with Specialist Careers Officers and/ or career class discussions
Type of assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focused on young people's abilities rather than deficits, in relation to their futures • focused on what young people wanted to do in their futures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one-off events just before young people left school—thus unable to provide progressive planning throughout high school to post-school lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • according to law, FNA process began shortly after young person turned fourteen—thus potential to provide progressive planning and refinement of plans
Professional interactions with young people, within full meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people spoken to directly • criticism of young people avoided, and ameliorated when made • young people frequently asked if they had any questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people and parents rarely contributed verbally in the meetings • young people and parents might not have voiced disagreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people and parents rarely contributed verbally in the meetings • young people and parents might not have voiced disagreement • professionals tended to talk about the young people • professionals sometimes criticised the young people
Range of topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wide range of topics covered 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited range of topics covered

	Educational-Vocational (EVs) Meetings		Future Needs Assessment (FNAs) Meetings	
	Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
Consensus on Recommendations/ Decisions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rarely a consensus on what recommendations were made, who was responsible for implementing them, and a timetable for implementation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rarely a consensus on what decisions were made, who was responsible for implementing them, and a timetable for implementation
Paper-work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minutes sent to all participants; professional reports available to young people and parents, with appointment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minutes not always fully accurate on what occurred at meetings • professional reports sometimes not changed, nor notes attached, to match the recommendations altered at the meetings 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only one meeting had minutes sent to all participants • professional reports often not completed, distributed, nor filed • no requirement to send professional reports to young people/ parents • no official FNA2 letter in professionals' files, up to six months after observed FNA2 meetings
Future Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people tended to be responsible for acting on the recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EV team members reported that little action tended to result 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • future action possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decisions tended to only be on two options • little follow-up evident in review FNA meetings • young people rarely responsible for implementing decisions
Management or Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individualised to each young person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not challenge opportunities available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at times, sensitive to goals of individual young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not challenge opportunities available

Management or Challenge?

The analysis of the EV and FNA meetings by Kirp's frameworks identified differences between their conceptualisations of the 'transitional problem' (see pages 259-260 and 264-265). The proceedings of the EV meetings suggested that the problem was the lack of appropriate and sufficient information and advice, and the EV meetings offered interdisciplinary professional collaboration in assessing and advising as the solution. The FNA meetings addressed the risk of professionals not co-ordinating their services, and thus failing to provide a day-time placement for young people to go once they left school. The FNA meetings addressed this risk by bringing professionals together to ensure a smooth and planned transition took place for each young person.

The analysis via the empowerment concept suggested that both types of meetings had the possibility to include young people's views and contributions in the conceptualisation of, and resulting solutions to, the 'transitional problem'. In these and other ways, young people could be empowered by both how the meetings proceeded and what resulted. The analysis suggested, however, that the particularities of certain meetings (and most commonly, the FNAs) prevented young people from actively contributing to the conceptualisations of, and solutions to, the 'transitional problem'. The focus on the individual young people in most meetings prevented the macro aspects of empowerment from being realised—that is, challenging and causing change in the opportunities available for the young people when they left school.

The examination of good and bad practices further described how the meetings conceptualised the 'transitional problem'. The EV participants constructed a broader view of the 'transitional problem', to include a range of areas from housing to employment to recreation. The FNA participants constructed a more limited view of the 'transitional problem', typically only offering decisions on school or Further Education college placement.

Were these conceptualisations of, and solutions to, the 'transitional problem' sufficient to address the situation outlined in Chapter Two?

By individualising the 'transitional problem' and offering interdisciplinary collaboration as the 'solution', the observed meetings arguably 'managed' the social problem rather than changed it.

A discourse of 'management' could be seen to typify the FNA meetings. This discourse was filled with terms of professional management—such as 'appropriate provision' and a 'planned and smooth transition'—rather than terms of empowerment—such as young people's 'control' and 'matching abilities with opportunities'. In practice, the 'assembly line approach' seemed to dominate the meetings. The meetings were typically dedicated to the smooth processing from provision to provision, rather than to examine the value of such provision or to explore opportunities.

The FNA meetings' offer of even limited provision and managing the social problem was appreciated by many parents and certain young people. Some parents and young people feared that no help would be offered to them when the young people left school. To know that a large number of potentially influential professionals were interested in ensuring that the young people 'did not fall through the cracks' surely provided young people with hope for the future. Compared to previous institutionalisation or leaving the young people to "*stare at the four walls of home*", the management offered by the FNA meetings was more empowering. But compared to the disability advocacy movement's challenge to the status quo (see, for example, Oliver 1990), the FNA meetings' reliance on managing the 'transitional problem' failed to empower young people significantly.

At a micro level, the EV meetings could be seen as empowering. Surely young people were empowered by improved information, self-awareness and a positive knowledge of their abilities. The EV meetings could provide these factors. Further, the young people's own need to control their futures was recognised by young people's responsibility to implement most recommendations. The EV meetings' practice met one of Hubbard's most strongly expressed recommendations for FNA meetings: that FNAs be 'user-led' and thus focus on the personal and social development of individual young people, and their future service needs (1992 p.97).

On the other hand, many EV young people and parents noted that the information provided was not new. What some young people and parents hoped for was concrete support and action from the meetings (even though the meetings were officially advertised as providing assessment). The EV participants, though, were largely not composed of future service providers.

The EV meetings could provide advice, not plans. In this way, young people were not actually 'matched' with opportunities, but advised on opportunities. Resources were not provided, but suggestions for resources. Were young people significantly empowered if nothing was likely to happen from the wealth of advice and recommendations?

A particular remark in my Ontario research had originally crystallised my desire to look at the 'transitional problem' more closely:

The sadness is, that often there is nothing for them after they're 21, you know. They stay at school until 21 and then there isn't anything for the young people ...

At least now, more and more people realise that many young disabled people face difficulties when they leave school. Increasingly, such difficulties are recognised as unfair and wasteful. I would say, however, that our present problem setting and problem solving still remain inadequate.

I began this research agreeing with the call for greater inter-disciplinary collaboration, to ensure that young people did not 'fall through the cracks'. I also agreed with the call for a clear, consensual, statement of transitional objectives:

What is needed is a conceptual framework for transition which encompasses all aspects of the move through adolescence to adulthood. Within this framework there needs to be a clear statement of objectives in behavioural terms. If these objectives could be agreed by all agencies, by professionals, and by parents and above all by the young people themselves, there might be a more concerted effort to develop coherent approaches to the process of transition and less confusion in areas of responsibility.
(CERI 1991, p.9)

Without clear and common objectives, the inter-disciplinary collaboration would only be unfocused and young people would continue to find the transition problematic. If the transitional problems could be productively defined so that the necessary goals were set, than substantive action could be taken to ameliorate the problems.

After this research, I think that more than enough attention has been focused on trying to determine the transitional problems, solutions and construct transition models. Enough information has been gathered on what the 'transitional problems' are and what transitional goals should be. Over and over again, young disabled people have listed what they want. They

want accessible housing, employment, transportation, services and communities. They want to participate, to be included, to be independent, and to have control of their own lives. (For example, see Anderson & Clarke 1982; Tisdall 1990; Ward et al. 1991). Young disabled people do not always state the exact same list—but why should they be expected to? Even when disabled people construct the lists (which I suggest they should), the debate could continue endlessly about the ‘proper’ list of transitional goals.

How many of us, labelled disabled or not, fulfil any list of transitional goals provided within the literature? Why should young disabled people be expected to follow a set list many people never meet? Instead of focusing on individuals meeting transitional goals, I would suggest much more focus be placed on ensuring that opportunities are available. Such a focus requires no absolute list, but a combination of disabled people’s views stated above. Whether or not individual young people want to move away from their parental homes, accessible housing should be available. Whether or not individual young people want to learn how to swim, swimming pools should be accessible for them. Whether or not individual young people want to work at a particular career, the possibility for them to train, interview and work at such a career should exist. Enough information exists for a very clear agenda of what opportunities should be open. Which opportunities will be taken and which will be ignored can be decided by individual young people.

After this research, I think that inter-disciplinary meetings at best are only a small part of any solution to the ‘transitional problem’. Certainly, the inter-disciplinary meetings observed in this research could be improved. Perhaps inter-disciplinary collaborations can productively inform individual young people about opportunities. Perhaps determining and debating transitional goals help such collaborations better direct their resources. But what is the point of the professional expertise, resources and time put forward through inter-disciplinary meetings when opportunities are so limited? At worst, the meetings may be diverting attention and resources away from substantially solving the ‘problem’.

Too much is being done on changing the individual young people and too little is being done on widening the present dearth of post-school opportunities. Too much is being done professionally and too little is being done politically. Professionals working with the young people need to act politically, to challenge local environments. Politicians should be lobbied and enlisted at all governmental levels to legislate change. Central and local

governments in both Canada and Great Britain are presently funding disability advocacy groups' work: moneys could be available to such groups interested in liaison and working with young disabled people. Perhaps most importantly, young disabled people (and their parents) should be encouraged to see their environment politically and agitate for change.

Merely 'tinkering' with the professional and bureaucratic frameworks of the EV and FNA meetings is not enough. Young people cannot simply be 'added on' to structures that formerly excluded them, and be instantly empowered. The structures at the very least need to be changed substantially, and, at the most, radically re-thought.

Let us challenge the 'transitional problem' rather than continuously 'managing' it.

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¹Note that 'Colburne' is an alias for the Region in which the Scottish fieldwork took place.

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APPENDIX A: TERMINOLOGY

Terminology has considerable importance in the fight against society's discrimination and negative attitudes. Our references to people are now recognised as not being neutral identifiers. The references are active constructors of social reality, which have positive and negative effects disproportionately distributed. Many groups have fought against negative labelling: for example, women refusing to be called diminutive 'girls' and 'chairmen'; Afro-Americans arguing against the term 'nigger', as reminiscent of slavery; and Aboriginal People in Canada disagreeing with the imposed term of 'Indians'. Disabled people have similarly fought a battle against the terminology that constructed, and furthered, their exclusion from society. They have argued against terms like 'cripples' and 'morons' as unacceptable means of referring to certain disabled people. Such terms are now, undeniably, unacceptable within our discourse.

Everyone should be sensitive to what groups of people wish to call themselves. But difficulties arise when these groups do not propose the same terminology. The debate between 'people with disabilities' and 'disabled people' is a case in point.

The Ontario government has published suggested terminology to refer to people with disabilities, resulting from its consultation with disability advocacy groups. Similar advice was given to me when I interviewed disability advocates throughout North America. 'People with disabilities' was the preferred phrase, over phrases such as 'the disabled' or even 'disabled people'. The preferred phrase emphasises that they are people first and disabled second—disability is just one identifying characteristic, and not the only one.

Mike Oliver passionately argues against the phrase 'people with disabilities' in favour of 'disabled people':

We know that we do not just happen to have a disability or that we are people first; our disabilities are essential parts of self, to be affirmed and celebrated, not denied or relegated to an appendage; and as such, we demand to be called disabled people. (1992 p.21)

Since the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People and the Disabled Peoples International advocate this phrase, all should accept it as what disabled people wish to call themselves (Oliver 1992 p.21).

A choice between the two phrases 'disabled people' and 'people with disabilities' does not seem possible based on what disabled people wish to call themselves. On both sides of the debate are disabled people. On both sides of the debate are disability advocacy movements representing disabled people.

A different type of problem is raised by the labelling of people with 'learning difficulties'. In the past, people were often identified as 'mentally retarded', according to IQ testing. Further technical terms were used to categorise, such as 'idiot' and 'moron'. These terms soon gained a negative social connotation and now are considered unacceptable. The terminology moved onto such phrases as 'mentally handicapped', 'mentally challenged' and 'intellectually exceptional'. Even within my brief experience, I have been flustered by new terminology emerging in the space of a year, to refer to the very same grouping of people. The most recent in Scotland appears to be the phrase 'people with learning difficulties'.

The phrase highlights the difficulty with learning instead of focusing on something lacking in the individual. On the other hand, many people I have spoken to in other

countries are confused, because such terminology is typically applied only to people with dyslexia and other such specific reading and comprehension issues. Such people are perceived to need very different interventions and support than people who were formerly called 'mentally handicapped'. While the general term no doubt lessens the stigmatisation of the category (since people with dyslexia are typically less ostracised than people with 'mental handicaps'), the term is confusing to many disabled and nondisabled people.

In time, all might become familiar with the new phrase—but how soon will the terminology change again? Given the frantic turnover of past 'politically correct' terminology to refer to this group of people, I can only expect such change to continue. In discussions with disabled people, we have often concluded that what really needs to be changed are society's attitudes and not the present terminology. If society perceived these people more positively, the terminology would not so quickly gain negative and unacceptable connotations.

Academics have dissected the current reference to students with 'special educational needs' within the UK context. The Warnock Report particularly advocated this terminology instead of the previous eleven medical/ behavioural categories. The new labelling was supposed to emphasise students' interaction within the school system rather than medical categories that had little application to education and many negative connotations attached. Many academics, however, find that the term 'special educational needs' is still largely used in reference to individual students' 'deficits' rather than interaction within the educational system. The same type of students who were labelled with medical categories before is now labelled with 'special educational needs'. The new term is accused of being merely superficial make-up and not a substantively new orientation. (For example, see Kirp 1982 and Fulcher 1989.)

This research unearthed a somewhat less contentious debate between the terms 'professionals' and 'service providers'. Within Ontario, discourse has moved away from 'professionals', because of the negative hierarchical connotations of the word. Professionals, it has been said, do more to serve their own interests than their clients; professionals use their expert knowledge as power over their clients, perpetuating the clients' subordinate positions (for example, see Oliver 1991b). Instead, some people advocate the term 'service providers'. People with expert knowledge should see their role as providing services to clients—services sensitive to the clients' needs. The term is suggested because the term implies a more equal relationship between client and service provider than client and professional.

Yet within Scotland, one professional reacted strongly against my use of the phrase 'service provider' (see pages 261-262). Not all professionals, she said, actually provide services. Preferred common terminology did not seem to exist on both sides of the Atlantic. The term 'professionals' does seem the most comprehensible to a general reader, and for this reason is used throughout the main text. At the same time, the difference needs to be recognised because it does suggest significant differences in discourse—suggesting differences in choice of policy frameworks and clients' control, for examples—between the two settings.

Within this text, certain choices had to be made about how to refer to different groups of people. The phrases 'disabled people' and 'people with disabilities' are used interchangeably. Since this text will be primarily read by Scottish people, I will use the current phrase of 'people with learning difficulties'. Again, the term 'professionals' will be used rather than 'service providers' to ease comprehensibility. In a year's time, I might already be discontent with these choices. But such is the nature of our changing discourse on disability.

**APPENDIX B:
CONSENT FORMS AND QUESTIONNAIRES**

(Young Person's Consent Leaflet,
FNAs)

FOR STUDENTS

PLEASE,
CAN YOU HELP
ME?

If you would like to find out more about
my work, please 'phone

Kay Tisdall

(031) 650 3921

or leave a message (031) 650 3925

or write to me at:

Department of Social Policy
University of Edinburgh
Adam Ferguson Building
George Square
Edinburgh
EH8 9LL

(Parent's Consent Leaflet, FNAs)

FOR PARENTS

PLEASE,
CAN YOU HELP
ME?

If you would like to find out more about
my work, please 'phone

Kay Tisdall

(031) 650 3921

or leave a message (031) 650 3925

or write to me at:

Department of Social Policy
University of Edinburgh
Adam Ferguson Building
George Square
Edinburgh
EH8 9LL



UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Department of Social Policy and Social Work

ADAM FERGUSON BUILDING, GEORGE SQUARE, EDINBURGH EH8 9LL

Telephone: 031-667 1011 ext

Telex: 727442 UNIV ED G

I agree to participate in research to be undertaken by Kay Tisdall, concerning
Future Needs Assessment meetings at _____ School,

I understand that this will involve audiotaping meetings held at _____ in
October 1991 and March 1992 (with a possible additional date in January
1992), and access to written records used and resulting from the meetings.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be protected, under the guidance of
supervisors and the Department of Social Policy and Social Work (University of
Edinburgh).

Name (please print)

Signature

Date

(Young Person's Medical Consent Letter, FNAs)

Date

Dear

Kay Tisdall has sent you a leaflet about her research on Future Needs Assessments. My team and I have agreed to take part in her project.

If you are also going to take part in Kay Tisdall's project, may Kay Tisdall see medical reports written for your Future Needs Assessment meetings, and anything I write down about the meetings? Should you agree, I and my team have decided to let her see such reports. All material will be kept strictly confidential.

Please read the bottom of the page carefully. If you agree, please sign your name and date, and send the bottom of the page back to me in the stamped envelope.

If you have any questions or worries, please talk to me, or 'phone Kay Tisdall (650 3921). Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. R. Bathe
Consultant Paediatrician

I agree that Kay Tisdall can look at my medical reports for, and about, my Future Needs Assessment meetings of October 1991 and March 1992.

These reports will be kept strictly private. Only Kay Tisdall will have access to the reports. No one will be able to tell I took part, in any write-up of the project.

Your Name

Date

(Parent's Medical Consent Form, FNAs)

Date

Dear

You will have received information from Kay Tisdall about her project on Future Needs Assessments. I am fully supporting Kay Tisdall's research concerning Future Needs Assessments, to be done at Robertson School. The FNA process is under review by the Region, and Miss Tisdall's research will have practical influence on any changes. I feel it is a very worthwhile project to support.

In order to consider how people talk about transition, Miss Tisdall would like access to reports written for or after the October and March FNA meetings. This would include certain medical reports. If you decide to participate in her project, I would like to ask you specifically if Miss Tisdall may have access to your son's/ daughter's reports. My team and I have agreed to provide her with access to these reports, should you agree. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

Please sign and tear off the section at the bottom of the page if you agree to let Miss Tisdall have access to your son's/ daughter's reports used for these meetings, and mail it in the envelope provided.

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Miss Tisdall (650 3921). Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. R. Bathe
Consultant Paediatrician

I agree that Kay Tisdall can have access to my son's/ daughter's medical reports used at his/ her Future Needs Assessment meetings in October 1991 and March 1992.

I understand these reports will only be used for research purposes, and that they will be kept in the strictest confidence. No identifying characteristics will be included in any output resulting from this research.

Signature(s) of Parent(s)

Date



THE REHABILITATION CENTRE
LE CENTRE DE RÉADAPTATION

A division of the Royal

Health Care Group / Une division des services de santé Royal

CONSENT FORM
(Adolescent/Young Adult)

The transition from education to adulthood is an important and potentially difficult time for young people. Vocational Educational Assessments are an attempt by The Rehabilitation Centre, together with other services to help make this transition easier and successful. A similar process in , Scotland - Future Needs Assessments - also aims to make transition easier. This research proposes to compare the assessments in both and .

Such research will inform practitioners and clients of their own local situation and suggest other, and perhaps better ways to help young people make this transitions. The Rehabilitation Adolescent Team is taking a hard look at the Vocational Educational Assessments and is greatly interested in the results of this project. Your participation in this project would thus influence the future of this assessment process.

With your permission, Kay Tisdall (Ph.D. Candidate from the University of Edinburgh) would attend your assessment meeting as an observer. Should you agree to participate, Kay Tisdall would:

- (a) make an audiotape of the meeting
- (b) have access to anything written for or after the meeting
- (c) ask the you to fill in a very short questionnaire before and after the meeting (about 5 minutes each), asking about expectations and reflections on the meeting.

I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that information will be collected and used for research purposes only and will be treated as confidential. I have been informed about the purpose of the study and realize that I am under no obligation to participate and may withdraw at any time. Refusal to participate or withdraw from the study will in no way affect my present and/or future treatment at the Rehabilitation Centre.

PLEASE PRINT YOUR FAMILY NAME: _____

PLEASE SIGN YOUR NAME: _____

WITNESS: _____

DATE: _____





THE REHABILITATION CENTRE LE CENTRE DE RÉADAPTATION

A division of the Royal

Health Care Group / Une division des services de santé Royal

CONSENT FORM (Parents/Caregivers)

The transition from education to adulthood is an important and potentially difficult time for young people. Vocational Educational Assessments are an attempt by The Rehabilitation Centre, together with other services to help make this transition easier and successful. A similar process in Scotland - Future Needs Assessments - also aims to make transition easier. This research proposes to compare the assessments in both and

Such research will inform practitioners and clients of their own local situation and suggest other, and perhaps better ways to help young people make this transitions. The Rehabilitation Adolescent Team is taking a hard look at the Vocational Educational Assessments and is greatly interested in the results of this project. Your child's participation in this project would thus influence the future of this assessment process.

With your permission, Kay Tisdall (Ph.D. Candidate from the University of Edinburgh) would attend your adolescent/young adult's assessment meeting as an observer. Should you agree to participate, Kay Tisdall would:

- (a) make an audiotape of the meeting
- (b) have access to anything written for or after the meeting
- (c) ask the young person to fill in a very short questionnaire before and after the meeting (about 5 minutes each), asking about expectations and reflections on the meeting.

I agree to allow my child to participate in this study with the understanding that information will be collected and used for research purposes only and will be treated as confidential. I have been informed about the purpose of the study and realize that my child is under no obligation to participate and may withdraw at any time. Refusal to participate or withdraw from the study will in no way affect my child's present and/or future treatment at the Rehabilitation Centre.

PLEASE PRINT YOUR FAMILY NAME: _____

PLEASE SIGN YOUR NAME: _____

WITNESS: _____

DATE: _____



• O N T A R I O •

(Young Person's Pre-Meeting Questionnaire, FNAs)

Name: _____

Hi, I'm Kay Tisdall. I was around Robertson a bit last year, helping out in some classes. I am looking at what will happen to students after they leave school, in particular Future Needs Assessments.

Have you heard that phrase before, "Future Needs Assessments"? Y N

Do you know about the meeting on your Future Needs that will be held tomorrow? Y N

First, I would like to ask you about the next year, and the next five years.

1. In the next year, what would you like to be doing, either
i. in school?

ii. once you leave school?

3. In the next five years, what would you like to be doing, either
i. in education

ii. out of school

4. What do you expect will happen in the meeting tomorrow?

5. a. Is there anything you want to say at the meeting?
b. (If Yes: What would you like to say at the meeting?

c. Do you think you will say it, or will someone else talk about it?

6. a. What do you think this meeting is for?

b. What do you think about it?

(Young Person's Pre-Meeting Questionnaire, EVs)

Initials of YP: _____

First, I would like to ask you about the next year, and then the next five years.

1. In the next year, what would you like to be doing, either

i. in school?

ii. once you leave school

2. In the next five years, what would you like to be doing, either

i. in education

ii. out of school

3. What do you think of the assessment so far?

(follow-up questions? was the assessment what you expected?

what do you think was good about the assessment?

what do you think was bad about the assessment?)

4. What do you expect will happen in the meeting tomorrow?

5. a. Is there anything you want to say at the meeting?

b. (If Yes: What would you like to say at the meeting?

c. Do you think you will say it, or will someone else talk about it?

6.a. What do you think this meeting is for?

b. What do you think about it?

(Young Person's Post-Meeting Questionnaire, FNAs)

Name: _____

Remember yesterday when we had a chat about the meeting this morning...

1. What did you think of the meeting?

2. I would like to hear your views on the meeting. Can you remember what happened at the meeting?

3. What decisions about your future were made at this meeting? (if necessary: Just to check, what do you think was decided?)

(if necessary: it seemed to me that the decisions were)

4. Which people are now supposed to do something about these decisions? (To student's answer? so remind me, who was ...? what does ... do?)

5. Are you satisfied with these decisions? Why or why not?

6. Do you feel your views and wishes were heard?

7. A. Who do you feel was most in charge at the meeting? _____
(if necessary: Who do you feel had the most influence on the meeting?)
B. Who do you feel had the least to say at the meeting? _____
C. Who do you feel was listened to the most? _____
D. Who do you feel was least listened to? _____

Initials of YP: _____

1. So, what did you think of the meeting?
2. I would like to hear your views on the meeting. Can you remember what happened at the meeting? You came into the room and ...
3. What recommendations about your future were made at this meeting? (if necessary: Just to check? what do you think was decided?)
4. Which people are now supposed to do something about these recommendations?
5. Are you satisfied with these recommendations? Why or why not?
6. Do you feel your views and wishes were heard?
7. A. Who do you feel was most in charge at the meeting? _____
(if necessary: Who do you feel had the most influence on the meeting?)
B. Who do you feel had the least to say at the meeting? _____
C. Who do you feel was listened to the most? _____
D. Who do you feel was least listened to? _____

Name: _____

Hi, I'm Kay Tisdall. I wanted to ask just a couple of questions about this meetings we just had. Any answers to these questions will be kept strictly confidential.

1. What did you think of the meeting?

2. I would like to hear your view on what happened at the meeting. Can you run through it for me?

3. What decisions about your child's future were made at this meeting?

4. Who is now supposed to do something about these decisions?

5. Are you satisfied with these decisions? Why or why not?

6. Do you feel your views and wishes were heard?

7. A. Who do you feel was most in charge at the meeting? _____
B. Who do you feel had the least to say at the meeting? _____
C. Who do you feel was listened to the most? _____
D. Who do you feel was least listened to? _____

8. How do you perceive the purpose of the meeting?

(Parent's Post-Meeting Questionnaire, EVs)

Initials of YP: _____

1. What did you think of the meeting?
2. I would like to hear your view on what happened at the meeting. Can you run through it for me? You came into the room and ...
2. What recommendations about your child's future were made at this meeting?
3. Who is now supposed to do something about these recommendations?
4. Are you satisfied with these recommendations? Why or why not?
5. Do you feel your views and wishes were heard?
6. A. Who do you feel was most in charge at the meeting? _____
B. Who do you feel had the least to say at the meeting? _____
C. Who do you feel was listened to the most? _____
D. Who do you feel was least listened to? _____
7. How do you perceive the purpose of the meeting?

Any general comments about the assessments:

(Professional's Post-Meeting Questionnaire, FNAs)

Your Name: _____

Student's Initials: _____

Please fill in the questionnaire below about the FNA meeting just finished. Please write clearly.

Names are requested purely for identification of roles. Confidentiality and Anonymity will be protected in this research.

1. Describe how the meeting proceeded in a few words -- what happened?

2. What decisions about the student's future were made at this meeting?

3. Which people are now supposed to do something about these decisions?

4. Are you satisfied with these decisions? Why or why not?

5. Do you feel your views were heard?

6. A. Who do you feel was most in charge at the meeting? _____

B. Who do you feel had the least to say at the meeting? _____

C. Who do you feel was listened to the most? _____

D. Who do you feel was least listened to? _____

Any general comments about the meeting:

Young Person's Initials: _____

1. Describe how the meeting proceeded in a few words—what happened?

2. What recommendations about the young person's future were made at this meeting?

3. Which people are now supposed to do something about these recommendations?

4. Are you satisfied with these recommendations? Why or why not?

6. Do you feel your views were heard?

7. A. Who do you feel was most in charge at the meeting?

B. Who do you feel had the least to say at the meeting?

C. Who do you feel was listened to the most?

D. Who do you feel was least listened to?

Any general comments about the meeting:

(Example of Professional's Post-meeting Interview, FNAs)

1. How do you see your role in
 - a. the FNA process and
 - b. the FNA meeting?
 And what are the differences in your role in the different FN's? FN1 FN2 FN3?
2. How do you define the purpose of the FNA system? The FNA meetings?
3. What are the positive and negative aspects of the FNA system? the FNA meetings?
4. How do the Robertson School meetings compare to other FN meetings, for example, at Gilmour School?
5. Last October, John Mitchell, if you remember, had a FNA meeting. At that meeting, graphic arts was discussed as a career option. Could I just play you that part of the meeting? What is your impression of this discussion? Let me just play you what comes next. What do you see as going on between Ruth and Louise?
How does one balance being sensitive to the young person and being 'realistic'—what balance was achieved in John's case?
6. Several parents comment within the meeting that their child is being unusually silent, that their child is certainly not so quiet at home. How do you feel the meetings deal with the **young person**? How do the meetings facilitate or not facilitate the young person's inclusion?

What about the **parents**? For example, Mrs Sherry in March quite anxiously asked about what options were available for Melanie in the future, and Mrs Tandy gave quite an extensive answer. On the other hand, Mrs Mitchell expressed considerable anxiety over the meeting in October, and asked directly for help. Her comment was left with no one addressing it. Later, a professional commented to me that Mrs Mitchell was a 'troublesome parent'. How do you feel the meetings deal with parental questions, especially if they are not part of the meetings' purpose? How well do you feel parents or young people are prepared for the meeting—knowing what it is about, set up to contribute?
8. If you remember, one of the questions in the questionnaire asks about who is **responsible for the meeting's decisions**. An interesting result is the lack of consensus—there is little agreement of whom is responsible for the decisions. Are you surprised by this result? A striking difference between Colburne Region and Sheldon is that young people and parents are rarely responsible for acting on decisions here in Colburne Region. What do you think of this result?
9. In the Robertson meetings, the phrase '**keeping options open**' is often used. What are the options generally offered to young people at these meetings? What do you think of their range? Do you feel there is a free discussion of options with the young people/parents? Or are decisions made more outside of the meeting?
10. What is this '**transition** from school to whatever'? What is this 'whatever'?
11. Professionals I have talked to have raised the issue of professional interaction within the Robertson meetings? People have talked to me about such things as communication, or lack thereof, insecurity about roles, not receiving reports etcetera. Do you have any concerns or comments?
12. Do you feel my presence at the meetings changed them in any way? My audio-taping?

(Example of Professional's Post-meeting Interview, EV)

1. How do you see your role in
 - a. the assessments
 - b. the final meeting (post-conference) ?
2. Could you run through the process, step by step, a. the assessments
b. the final meeting (post-conference)?
3. How would you define the purpose of
 - a. the assessments
 - b. the final meeting (post-conference)?
4. What are the positive and negative aspects of the assessment? the final meeting?
5. Team members often bring up the issue of **follow-up**. What is presently done for follow-up? Any comments? Is this what should be done for follow-up?
6. Understandably, team members often use the term '**adolescent**' since this is the 'Young Adult and Adolescent Team'. Why was the term 'adolescent' chosen? Why the double name? What does 'adolescent' signify? What are the advantages/ disadvantages of using the term 'adolescent'?
7. Tara and I discussed the difficulty of parents/ young people incorporating the **information** about the assessment. Do you also see this as a problem? Why do you think parents/ young people do not take in the information?
8. Looking at the Colburne data, the issue of '**realism**' looms large. How does your team see/ deal with 'realism'? What techniques do the team use? How do you think parents/ young people feel about these techniques? What is positive about how the 'realism' issue is handled? What is negative?
9. Some team members are concerned about **duplication** in assessment/ service. Do you think there is duplication? (If not duplication? If I was, say, a manager and came in and said the team was duplicating services, how would you defend what the team does?
10. What level of **community** involvement does the team have? To what extent can the team serve out-of-two clients?
11. Talking to team members, lack of '**motivation**' was often mentioned. Just to be controversial, disability advocates argue against the blaming of 'motivation', which blames the individual for the failures of the system/ society. How would you answer such an accusation by disability advocates against your team's use of the concept 'motivation'?
12. Would you use the phrase "**transition from school**"? It is the transition from school to what? How would you define this transition?

EDUCATIONAL/VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

NAME: _____

DATE OF ASSESSMENT: _____

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9:30 - 10:30 Nursing	9:00 - 10:00 Social work	9:00 - 12 Noon PSYCHOLOGY	9:00 - 12 Noon PSYCHOLOGY	9:00 - 10:00 RECREATION 1st Level (if necessary)
10:30 - 11:00 PRE-ASSESSMENT CON. CONFERENCE ROOM _____	10:00 - 11:00 Nurses			10:00 - 11:00 DIETARY (if necessary)
11:00 - 12 Noon SOCIAL WORK 1st Floor	11:00 - 12:00 Dietary RM 2402	2nd Floor 12 Noon-1:00 LUNCH	2nd Floor	2nd Floor
1:00 - 2:00 PSYCHOLOGY 2nd Floor	1:00 - 2:00 Phyisio	1:00 - 2:00 Recreation 1st Floor	1:00 - 4:00 OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY 2nd Floor	1:00 - 2:30 PSYCHOLOGY WITH ONE parent Canequirer 2nd floor
2:00 - 3:00 RECREATION 1st Floor	2:00 - 4:00 O.T. 2nd floor	2:00 - 4:00 Phyisio. 1st floor		if any? call ext 519

APPENDIX C: NOTES ON TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

//	Break in flow of sentence
()	Pause.
=	immediate continuation of speech by another speaker
..	intake of breath
?	rising of intonation, as if asking a question
??	unclear word or phrase
xxxx	word was verbally stressed by speaker
[xxxx]	specific notes about sounds that could not be expressed in a word. For example, a sigh.
—xxxx—	words contained in double dashes overlap other words contained in double dashes

For example:

Kay: How—are you?—
John: —Fine.—And you?

Indicates that Kay's words "are you" were said during the same time as John's word "fine".

APPENDIX D: TRANSCRIPT SECTIONS FOR CHAPTER SEVEN

Gillian Stone

- Clive *Um, but I think things didn't go all that well at St. Joseph's, although everybody there tried quite hard, including Gillian I think. Emm, but it was difficult to fit somebody into a totally new school system with, particularly if it was physical difficulties involved. Educational problems as well. And therefore we moved here in August. So it's a question of fitting in, everyone catching up, and filling gaps, and being aware of where's she's been in the past few years. Ah, she's very competent, she's very fluent, she can express herself very well and she's got a lot of thoughts and ideas about who she is and where she wants to go and all the rest of it. Her reading and educational skills are quite good. I think she gets tired quite easily, I'm not sure whether it's tired or she feels she's done enough for just now, thank you, umm [Gillian Stone laughed] [general laughter, Colin quite loud] She can write well, I think sometimes she tends to underestimate what she can do. Her main area, of any difficulties, is her number work, would that be right? That you always found maths a bit more difficult? Yeah.*
- Gillian Stone *Remembering.=*
- Mrs Stone *Remembering and actually [Gillian Stone made a small laugh] doing things, and getting them right. So that's an area which probably will continue to cause problems. That doesn't stop her from persevering. Ahm, but no, otherwise, certainly in terms of reading skills, comprehension and writing, she's actually done very well, over the years. I don't know where you fitted her into when she come back to you, latterly?*
- Clive *She's gone into S4.=*
- Colin *Right.=*
- Clive *So that's she come in, as if you're half, two-thirds of the way, through a two year course.*
- Colin *Yeah.*
- Clive *Which clearly is going to pose some difficulties in terms of the results she gets at the end, for, in a sense it's asking you to do something that isn't fair to to miss the first two-thirds and then do well for the last third, I mean that, clearly is difficult for anyone in any circumstances, and. But I think that that educationally brings us almost to where we are at the moment. Mrs Ross could you say—hmm?*
- Louise *I would just reinforce—it's—*
- Colin *—Yeah.—*
- Louise *been very difficult for in fact because she has gone into fourth year. So rest of the pupils have had a year on the course, and she's doing standard grade courses, quite difficult to fit her in. =*

- Clive *Will there be any of the work that she did in in St. Joseph's for the previous two terms? Will that—carry over—*
- Louise *—I don't think we've actually—had any, no. =*
- Clive *in terms of assessment, or =*
- Colin *I think there may be fragments of it, but but there's not all that much, if nothing else, 'cause a lot of the courses did not coincide. =*
- Clive *Right. ()*
- Louise *And ahm, life is a little bit slow, which is, you know, she's finding it quite hard to keep up, I think. ()*
- Clive *Slow at doing things? =*
- Louise *Yes. =*
- Clive *Getting things and =*
- Louise *Yes, she takes a =*
- Clive *Yes. =*
- Louise *long time to—get something done—*
- Clive *—Yes, that's yes, I recognise.—*
- Louise *As you said, when she does get something down, it's very good. =*
- Clive *Yeah. =*
- Louise *She just takes a long time =*
- Clive *Yeah. =*
- Louise *to do it.—I—*
- Clive *—Forward—*
- Louise *think she lacks a great deal of confidence as well. ()*
- Clive *Would, to recognise that, presumably, in terms of when she does exams, that she can begin longer, if need be () to ensure that she's been.*
- Louise *Well I don't think it's actually anything physical. =*
- Clive *Yes, but if it's in terms of the speed of thinking or the speed of getting it done, then I think that it does come into it. I think it could be allowed for. If that was the only issue, I think there have been b b b, well there certainly have been allowances in the past. =*
- Louise *Right. =*
- Clive *on on less secure grounds? ()*
- Colin *Yeah. We we we [Ruth in background explained this to Gillian Stone] can sort of repeat of, there's been several, but that's obviously is an issue. Umm. I think the the first step is to try and see what sort of plans you have, are we thinking in terms of you leaving school come the summer? ()*
- Gillian Stone *Oh I was planning on staying, you know to, just ()*
- Mrs Stone *Until you're ready to go.*
- Gillian Stone *Yeah. Pretty much, yeah. =*
- Colin *Uh huh. Ah, I forget, when do we start an old age pension in this country? [laughter]*
- Gillian Stone *Sixty. [laughter, especially Ms. Stone] ()*
- Mrs Stone *It's a joke. [Colin laughed]*
- Colin *You're looking too serious, I'm trying to get you to smile [Gillian Stone laughed, and smiled]. That's better. () Ahm, right, so, staying on at school beyond this summer.()*
- Gillian Stone *Yeah. =*

Colin *For, in a sense it doesn't matter at this stage whether it's a year
or two years. =*

Gillian Stone *I think two years. () I think.()*

Michael Smith

- Colin *Uh huh. Mrs Ross, would you like to comment on on how Michael is taken on at school? Or should Michael comment on how's he getting on at school? ()*
- Michael Smith *Well (), em, maths for example, I'm not very good at maths, subject of maths. English, I was o.k. () Emm. Science I think maybe I'd be at a general level on that one 'cause I was quite good at science. () Em. Music, on my last report card I got a really good report for my music [papers ruffling all through this], all grade one's for my music, so I was good at the music.*
- Colin *—Hmm hmm—*
- Michael Smith *—Ah () French, em, I was also good at. Umm () Mrs Tyler thinks I should do the credit exam paper for em French, so, I think ah I'm pretty good at, I was good at French and just really sticking with that. Emm () swimming I was pretty good at as well. ()*
- Colin *Hmm hmm. ()*
- Michael Smith *In CSS I'm getting a bit better I'm feeling I'm getting a bit more confident, my grades might be getting a bit higher.*
- Colin *Alright. () Do our colleagues [Louise laughed] actually agree with him, Mrs Ross, or [Colin laughed]—or are they saying a different story?—*
- Louise *—I've, I've,—I'm afraid apart from the French most people reckon he's a foundational pupil. () Ah, French is the one that shines through as being his subject around () academically. () Michael's problem is that he's so slow () he's so so, he finds it difficult to keep up () ah, both physically in arriving in class () he's quite often late and he finds it difficult to keep up with what's happening. ()*
- Colin *Ah, if we've got that as background then ah, the the next step is to actually try and decide what you want to do from then end of this session. And for that, we look entirely to you. What plans, what thoughts have you?*
- Michael Smith *In CSS I'm getting a bit better I'm feeling I'm getting a bit more confident, my grades might be getting a bit higher.*
- x

John Mitchell

- Eddie *Not really except that ahm () I'm very glad that John is happy here and doing well as we discovered when I popped in before the end of last session—*
- ? *—[cough]—*
- Eddie *and ah we just hope that he will go on and take a good range of courses () and come out at the end with ah () some very nice qualifications which John will be well capable of ()—*
- Mrs Mitchell *He certainly—*
- Eddie *I'm glad to see him nodding because he's well capable of it.*
- ...
- Colin *But thinking further ahead ah, obviously this sort of meeting, this sort of process, is around what you're going to be doing at 16, 17 and 18. Any vague thoughts, I mean, it's too early to have any precise thoughts, any—vague thoughts—*
- Mrs Mitchell *—There's something—*
- Colin *—about the sort of areas you'd be interested in?*
- John Mitchell *I want to be an account, hopefully.*
- Colin *An account?*
- John Mitchell *An account.*
- Colin *Ahh ahh.*
- John Mitchell *'Cause I love my maths ()*
- Mrs Mitchell *Hmm*
- Colin *???*
- Mrs Mitchell *And graphic design*
- John Mitchell *Oh, and graphic design ()*
- Mrs Mitchell *Umm hmm ()*
- Colin *You will have to work.*
- John Mitchell *I will have to work, I know that. [Mrs Mitchell laughed]*
- Mrs Mitchell *Hmm hmm () what counting in ?? () That =*
- Colin *But that sort of area certainly you're assuming.*
- John Mitchell *Yeah.*
- Colin *And we therefore assuming that it would be open employment that you'd be looking for ()*
- ?? woman *Hmm.*
- Colin *Yeah () I'm sure that's right.
[general murmur of agreement]*
- Eddie *Certainly something on the design or the artistic side () ah () If the accountancy is is is a bit =*
- Colin *—high ???—*
- Eddie *—too far away—*
- Mrs Mitchell *Yes, that's right*
- Eddie *But not to give it up.*
- Mrs Mitchell *Hmm hmm.*
- Eddie *But um, that could be () you certainly have talent ()*
- Mrs Mitchell *And he could go do something, I suppose maths and things like that can be combined with drawing.=*
- Eddie *Absolutely absolutely yes yes of course.*

Ruth *Computer aided design.*
 Eddie *Yes yes that sort of thing*
 Alison *I can see vacancies in my husband's firm immediately [a lot of laughter for a while. Pause]*
 Eddie *Now then now then. ()*
 Mrs Mitchell *But he certainly has improved vastly since he came here. ()*
 Ruth *Uh hmm.*
 Mrs Mitchell *He's never, he's only lost a day and half in the past year. Which is even a record for primary school [General laughter, including Mrs Mitchell. Mrs Mitchell still laughing when everyone else finished laughing.]*
 ...
 Louise *He's not keen on painting.*
 John Mitchell *I'm useless at painting.*
 Louise *Well, you see, you know, you're encouraging him to look at graphics and what not.*
 [murmur of agreement]
 ? Eddie *Uh hmm.*
 Louise *And obviously that is unrealistic [murmurs] () and I don't want him to get ideas that are () beyond what he may be capable of it's a very demanding course [murmurs] a graphic design course ()*
 Ruth *Is he capable of um changing his notions, do you think, Louise, on the painting? ()*
 Louise *Yes possibly possibly. ()*
 Ruth *Perhaps you're just the =*
 Louise *—It's only second year yet—*
 Ruth *—Uh hmm—*
 Louise *—I think you'd have to see—*
 Eddie *—Uh hmm uh hmm—*
 Louise *—once he started in in an art course just how committed he actually was—*
 Ruth *—(Started to say something and Louise not stop)*
 Louise *It's all very well, and I know perhaps when other subjects are not doing so well, people are sometimes inclined to fall back on art. But it's not an easy option,*
 Eddie *No indeed not. [Murmurs "no no" around table]*
 Alison *Something like technical drawing from, which combines the maths and the computer design. ()*
 Louise *We don't actually do the technical drawing here.*
 Alison *No, no, I . =*
 Eddie *Yes yes [General murmurs indicating of course not.]*
 Alison *What were the credit subjects, Mrs Ross?*
 Louise *His ah =*
 Alison *If possible =*
 Louise *His ah contemporary and social studies, CSS and science. () Not the maths.*
 Eddie *Hmm hmm hmm hmm ()*

Colin *But of course there will be another opportunity for you at the end of the session to look more closely at the subjects that he's doing, for the end of the second year, there there comes the point at which you have to choose the courses that you want to do in third and fourth year.*

Mrs Mitchell *Uh huh.*

Colin *I'm.*

Mrs Mitchell *[murmurs] ()*

Colin *Anything that you want to ask Mrs Mitchell?*

Mrs Mitchell *No, not really, no, I'm really quite behind here.*

Colin *John?*

Mrs Mitchell *[louder] I feel quite behind at the moment, you know.*

Colin *Ah.*

Mrs Mitchell *You know understanding it all. and this. And I it's just I know that he's more settled and that that his marks are improving through the fact that John he's he's happier in that way for he'll work harder and improved on them, if we think he's working now. Eh? Do you know what to do? [to John Mitchell] you know, um, I know he likes working with his hands and he wants with the maths with that and now. But I don't know what direction that takes him in either. [Mrs Mitchell laughed]*

Colin *Hmm.*

Mrs Mitchell *Humph, I () Eh? () So.*

Colin *Do ?*

Mrs Mitchell *Hmm. ()*

Linda Johnson

Ruth *We want to make life as easy for you as possible. And we want you to achieve as much as you can. And we will be supportive as much as we can. And if we can do more, than, we we should be asked.*

Linda Johnson *Hmm hmm. =*

...

Colin *In in a way, I think, if if I can sum for school, if you at any point get too embarrassed, you can just duck under the table, we won't mind at all, um. I think that ah you are a very able girl who has worked very effectively despite having huge interruptions through you know, health, through surgery. Despite having problems, frequently, because of the amount of pain that you have ah you should still get a fairly good sweep of exam results at the end of the year. I think that's a tremendous achievement. Ah. I don't know exactly how you want to plan beyond that. I would tend to assume that you would benefit from continuing academic subjects and study. Ah. I could understand that we could easily be justifying in a setting like this for another year, or two, possibly two years, to complete some, one year Highers, some two year Highers. You have been talking, I know, in terms of attending university, with an interest in Psychology. Now that that still is an interest?*

Linda Johnson *Yeah.*

Colin *Huh. That wouldn't seem to be unreasonable. What I think I would tend to wonder about would be the advisability of building in a year between.*

Linda Johnson *Hmm hmm.*

Colin *Because I think the the jump from somewhere like this. Clearly, by that time, a a lot is going to depend on your condition and and how things have gone and so on. But the jump from here straight into university might be difficult. () And it might be worth at that stage to be considering a year, a year in high school? Doing some some sixth year studies, courses or something like that? Certainly an integrated setting. A year in a FE college? () Residential or local? Again, there's different options here, and different courses. But I I think it would be much easier and much better for you if you try try to make the transition from a small scale setting like this to university in two steps. Rather than in one. () Now, does that sound like the sort of thing that you're thinking of, or or do you want to throw that right out the window and tell me what you want to do instead.*

Linda Johnson *No, I think something on the lines of what we've been thinking about.*

Colin *Hmm hmm?*

Linda Johnson *I was thinking of taking a year out, once I've got my Highers and things, and do bits and pieces to get the health side a chance to settle down. But still maybe doing something like like flexi study and part-time. I don't know.*

- Colin *Yeah. It would, I suppose, depend on all sorts of things. You could be in the position of Bob Stevenson, for example, where he had got entry qualifications into university from here, and chose to have a year at Campbell, taking courses but without having to get the exam results, because he already had them, and he and the university knew that he had. So that all the academic pressure was taken away. And it could be a year that was very much around developing socialisation, and courses of interest. Rather than having to get a paper to wave at the door of the university, in order to get let in.*
- Linda Johnson *Hmm hmm.*
- Colin *And the same sort of argument is valid for college.*
- Julie *Yes, yes, one thing that might be considered is that we offer A levels, in things like Psychology and Sociology, which can be an interesting introduction if you're going on to study it at university. Because you won't have done it, you know, for your Highers. So while there's no pressure on you to get it, it's working in an area that you're interested in, and it gets the process going. That's something to think about. ()*
- Colin *O.K.?*
- Linda Johnson *Yeah.*

Lara Nimes

- Mark *Lara, what's happened the last little while this last half hour, these folks that you see here, do you remember coming in here to chat with them and doing some funny things with them?*
- Lara Nimes *Hmm hmm.*
- Mark *Hmm. They're going to, they're going to feed back to you some information about that assessment. So they'll tell you some of things that you did really well in,*
- Lara Nimes *Hmm hmm. [Mrs Nimes chuckled]*
- Mark *and some of the areas that you may need a little help to improve upon. () O.K.*
- Mrs Nimes *You understand Lara? () Yes or no. ()*
- Mark *Your mum was asking you a question.*
- Mrs Nimes *Do you understand what he said? No? O.K.*
- Ellen* *Lara, what's going to happen now?*
- Lara Nimes *Happen? They're going to help us.*
- Ellen *Yeah. But right now, today.*
- Lara Nimes *Yeah.*
- Ellen *Do you know these people?*
- Mrs Nimes *—Do you remember these people?—*
- Ellen *—Look around.—*
- Mrs Nimes *Eh?*
- Ellen *Do you know these people?*
- Lara Nimes *Hmm hmm.*
- Ellen *You meet them here, right? At the hospital?*
- Mrs Nimes *Do you do you remember who she is? You're going to have to see her ah next week. [Mrs Nimes pointed to Ruth] [Ellen laughed.]*
- Ruth *Next week, March 18th. ()*
- Mrs Nimes *Hmm? ()*
- Mark *Do you remember talking to any of these people before? And did they make any, tell you things they might want to do? () No.*
- Lara Nimes *No.*
- Mark *Oh. They told you things you don't want to do! [Laughter] () Well maybe what we'll try is very briefly have them say some of that information again, so you would have heard it another time, and see if it helps out.*
- Lara Nimes *Yeah.*
- Mark *a little bit. We all have memory problems on occasion. And yours is probably better than mine. [Small laughter] ()*

* Ellen was Lara Nimes' classroom teacher.

**APPENDIX E:
TABLE OF REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE FOUND IN
FNA PROFESSIONALS' FILES**

Table N: Reports and Correspondence found in FNA Professionals' Files

	FNA Meetings								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	FNA1-2	FNA1-2	FNA2	FNA2	FNA3	FNA3	FNA3	FNA3	FNA3
Date of FNA2 meeting	17/10/91	17/10/91	17/10/91	17/10/91	21/03/91	26/10/89	21/03/91	25/10/90	16/03/89
Psychology report	20/03/91 (s) M	24/05/91 (adm) MS	PC	09/10/91 PCMS	14/03/91 PCMS	5/10/89 PCMS	15/03/91 PCMS SW	20/10/90 PCSW FE	01/03/89 PCSW
Social Work Section 13 report				25/02/91 S	No Sect 13 report done - P	29/03/90 PMS			
Careers report			10/10/91 CS	14/10/91 PCS	18/03/91 PCMS		18/03/91 CMS	22/10/90 CM	
Medical report			24/10/90 MSW FE 11/10/91 MS	15/10/91 PMS 24/10/90 M	28/02/91 PMS	11/09/89 M	08/03/91 MS	20/10/90 FEC 12/10/90 MS	
FNA2 letter to parent					19/04/91 PMS	13/02/90 PMS			04/01/90 PMS

The date (day/month/year) noted is the date recorded on the relevant report.

Legend:

P = report found in relevant psychologist's files

M = report found in medical files

C = report found in relevant careers officer's files

S = report found in school's files

FE = report found in college representative's files

SW = report found in social work representative's files

The majority of reports were gathered from files between April 1992 to October 1992. Psychologists and careers files were the first accessed (April to May); school files were looked at in October; and medical files were accessed in both May and October.

**APPENDIX F:
TABLES OF PARTICIPANTS' SATISFACTION**

Table O: Participants' Overall Satisfaction with Future Needs Assessment (FNA) Meetings

FNA	FNA Type	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Reasons given for high or low satisfaction
Brian McKrae	FNA 1		parent 1 professional	young person 2 professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • too embarrassed to speak (young person) • lack of input from young person (professional)
Jessica Gordon	FNA 1	2 professionals	2 parents 2 professionals	2 professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not sure how to participate in meeting (parents) • hesitant input from parents (professional)
Fiona Morrison	FNA 1	young person		parent 1 professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thought meeting would flow more (parent) • meeting did not flow well (professional)
Andrew Tait	FNA 1	1 professional	young person	parent 1 professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not a lot of information (parent) • more preparation to help young person's and parent's input (professional)
Jamie Ross	FNA 1	young person		2 professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of input from young person (professional)
John Mitchell	FNA 1-2	1 professional	parent 4 professional	young person 1 professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unhappy with response to ideas (young person) • certain issues not discussed (professional)
Gillian Stone	FNA 1-2	young person parent 1 professional			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no argument at meeting (young person) • ideas were listened to (young person) • meeting participants listened to young person (parent)
Traci Miadich	FNA 2			young person 2 parents 2 professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of input from young person (young person, professionals) • parents not able to participate (parents)
Neil Thompson	FNA 2	young person 2 parents		2 professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of input from young person and parents (professional) • unrealistic decisions (professional)
Linda Johnson	FNA 3	1 professional	young person parent		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not much happen (young person)
Kate Lewis	FNA 3		1 professional	young person parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meeting too short, waste of time (parent)

FNA	FNA Type	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Reasons given for high or low satisfaction
Andrew Lovatt	FNA 3	young person 1 professional	parent	1 professional	• unclear about Section 13 status (professional)
Tom Akroyd	FNA 3	young person parent 1 professional			• meeting participants listen to young person's ideas (young person) • appreciative of help post-school (parent)
Michael Smith	FNA 3		1 professional	young person parent 2 professionals	• depressed due to meeting's discussion (young person) • negative messages sent to young person (professional) • meeting dealt with unrealistic expectations (professional)
Total		6 young people 4 parents 8 professionals	2 young people 6 parents 9 professionals	5 young people 6 parents 16 professionals	

Table P: Participants' Overall Satisfaction with Educational-Vocational (EV) Meetings

EV	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Sample reasons given for high or low satisfaction
Lara Nimes	young person 1 professional	1 professional	parent 2 professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• liked particular decisions (young person)• waste of time because decisions not practical (parent)• egalitarian (professional)• information communicated to young person? (professional)
David Bassot	young person parent	1 professional		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a lot of information (young person)• did young person and parent have opportunity to ask questions? (professional)
Val Trudeau	young person parent 2 professionals			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• good information sharing (professional)
Tom Shields	1 professional	young person parent	2 professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• what will happen as a result of the meeting? (parent, young person, 2 professionals)• team members consensus on recommendations (professional)
Katy Downes	young person parent			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• informative (young person)
Anne Clifton	2 professionals			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• good picture of young person (professional)
Paul Fernoux	1 professional		2 professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• client not show for meeting (professional)• will client carry through on recommendations? (professional)
Total	4 young people 3 parents 7 professionals	1 young person 1 parent 2 professionals	1 parent 6 professionals	

Table Q: Participants' Satisfaction with Future Needs Assessment (FNA) Meetings' Decisions

FNA	FNA Type	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Reasons given for high or low satisfaction
Brian McKrae	FNA 1	young person parent* 3 professionals	1 professional		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appreciate help when young person leaves school (parent) • process irrelevant for young person's situation (professional)
Jessica Gordon	FNA 1	2 parents 4 professionals	3 professionals		
Fiona Morrison	FNA 1	young person parent 2 professionals	2 professionals		
Andrew Tait	FNA 1	young person parent* 4 professionals			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • too early to make decisions, satisfied that will make later (parent)
Jamie Ross	FNA 1	young person 5 professionals	2 professionals		
John Mitchell	FNA 1-2	6 professionals	1 professional	young person parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young person's ideas not listened to by meeting (young person) • confused about decisions (parent) • unrealistic ideas raised by young person, but handled by meeting (professional)
Gillian Stone	FNA 1-2	young person parent 7 professionals			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young person's ideas listened to by meeting (young person)
Traci Miadich	FNA 2	young person 5 professionals	2 professionals	2 parents	
Neil Thompson	FNA 2	young person 2 parents 5 professionals		1 professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decision unrealistic (professional)

FNA	FNA Type	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Reasons given for high or low satisfaction
Linda Johnson	FNA 3	parent 7 professionals	young person 1 professional		• young person will decide herself what do (young person)
Kate Lewis	FNA 3	young person 7 professionals	parent*		• meeting not efficient way to make decisions (parent)
Andrew Lovatt	FNA 3	young person parent 6 professionals	1 professional		
Tom Akroyd	FNA 3	young person parent 7 professionals			• decisions what young person wants (young person, professionals)
Michael Smith	FNA 3	young person parent* 4 professionals	1 professional	2 professionals	• negative messages sent to young person (professional)
Total		11 young people 12 parents 72 professionals	1 young person 1 parent 14 professionals	1 young person 3 parents 3 professionals	

* young people and/ or parent(s) voiced different satisfaction levels than they did for their overall meeting

Table R: Participants' Satisfaction with Educational-Vocational (EV) Meetings' Recommendations

EV	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Sample reasons given for high or low satisfaction
Lara Nimes	6 professionals		young person parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not like specific recommendations (young person and parent) • recommendations appropriate for client (professional)
David Bassot	young person parent 1 professional		3 professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reasonable recommendations (young person) • a particular assessment not done (professional)
Val Trudeau	young person parent 6 professionals			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concrete, practical recommendations (professional)
Tom Shields	6 professionals	young person parent	2 professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • particular issues not raised in meeting (young person) • what will happen as a result of the meeting? (professional) • consensus on recommendations (professional)
Katy Downes	young person parent 2 professionals			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommendations appropriate for client (professional)
Anne Clifton	7 professionals	1 professional		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good recommendations, but will an actual job result? (professional) • consensus on recommendations (professional)
Paul Fernoux	1 professional		2 professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will the client carry through on recommendations, given his general lack of motivation? (professional)
Total	3 young people 3 parents 29 professionals	1 young person 1 parent 1 professionals	1 young person 1 parent 7 professionals	

* young person voiced different satisfaction levels than she did for the overall meeting

APPENDIX G: RECOMMENDATIONS AS A RESULT OF THIS RESEARCH

LONG TERM

- Radically re-think Future Needs Assessment (FNA) and Educational-Vocational (EV) meetings, from perspective of young people—their futures and their empowerment.

MEDIUM TERM

- Disability advocacy groups should be funded to work with young people, particularly young disabled people.
- Professionals need to meet together with young disabled people, their parents and disabled adults to discuss and decide changes to the manner and content of service provision. Both post-school opportunities and the present EV/ FNA meetings' structures should be subjects for discussion.
- Politicians should be lobbied and enlisted at all governmental levels to legislate change. Suggestions for political lobbying: using existing structures of UK All Party Parliamentary Groups for Children, Disabled People, etc.; using existing lobbying groups for families, disabled people, disabled children and children; work with local MPs and civil servants.
- EV meetings should move to a decision-making mandate with the attendance of community agency service providers **or** the Individual Placement and Review Committees' (IPRCs') annual reviews within the school system should take on a transitional role (like the FNA system) and use the EV assessments' 'snapshot' as a resource for particular circumstances.
- Further Research:
 - a. How meetings' decisions/ recommendation effect young people's futures. Such research should include young people's longer-term perspective on the effectiveness of the FNA and EV process and how young people view the complete FNA process;
 - b. Comprehensive and comparative study of FNA practice across Scotland, to consider best models of practice within present legislative structure. Such research should be based on young people's and parents' suggestions for research, and their views of the FNA process should be given priority;
 - c. An evaluation of the efficacy of the EVs voluntary nature: Who are the young people who do not use the EVs in the Sheldon area? Do the EVs cater for those who most need the help/ wish to use the service?
 - d. Investigate other models of practice, e.g. Kurator system in Denmark; and
 - e. Investigate gender issues and professionals' roles within the EV and FNA meetings.

IMMEDIATE TO SHORT-TERM

If FNA and EV meetings are not fundamentally changed, these more immediate changes are recommended:

Future Needs Assessment (FNA) Meetings

Preparation:

- Young people and parents should be prepared for the FNA meetings. Possible options are:
 - 1) One-to-one meetings with FNA professionals. Possibly an advocate can work with the young person immediately before the meeting, so young people can discuss her/ his views and decide meeting strategy;
 - 2) Group seminars, professionally-led, with young people and parents; and/ or
 - 3) Advocacy work within peer groups.
- Professionals should be trained **together** on such issues as: group dynamics; ways to deal with young people's 'realism'; collaboration. A suggestion would be to hire young disabled people, parents and disability advocates to contribute to such training.
- Meeting agendas could be sent out to young people and parents in advance, with young people and parents being invited to suggest agenda topics.

- **Reports:**

Young people and parents should have the opportunity and support to make and distribute their own reports specifically for the FNA meetings.

Reports should identify young people's abilities in relation to the young people's futures.

A wide range of areas—from housing to employment to social opportunities—should be considered in the appropriate reports. The young people should be included in the professionals' assessments in defining what areas should be addressed.

Young people's vocational abilities and interests should be tested and reported by suitably trained professional(s).

Reports should be completed and distributed to all participants (including young people and parents) before the meetings. Of particular note is the Section 13 report, which rarely appeared to be completed in this research fieldwork.

The school's educational up-date should be previously discussed with young people and parents, and presented as a report to distribute with other reports.

- If pre- or post-meeting discussions are deemed necessary by professionals, such discussions should be held openly.

Timing:

- Schedule at least 30 minutes for each FNA meeting. Scheduling should allow for meetings to be extended if necessary. Consideration of professionals' time must be taken account of, both in attending and preparing for meetings. Within a school, this might require coverage by a supply teacher for the FNA teacher representative.
- FNA meetings should be scheduled at parents', as well as professionals', convenience. This may require early morning or evening meetings to accommodate parents' employment schedules. Professionals would have to be compensated or have more flexible working hours.
- Ideally, FNA meetings should be spaced throughout the year so not all meetings are scheduled in one day (for example, Grampian Region is reported to follow this practice).
- The three-step structure of the FNA meetings should be re-considered. FNA meetings could start at the FNA2 meetings, with suitable preparation by and for all participants. The FNA meetings should be seen as a progression of decisions, which aid the young person in realising her/ his abilities and defining her/ his goals for the future.

Attendance

- Meetings should be re-scheduled if any participant cannot attend (thus FNA meetings must be seen as a priority by professionals' agencies and by professionals themselves to prevent frequent re-scheduling).
- Employer representatives should be invited.
- A case social worker should be assigned to the young person by time of the FNA2 meeting, and should attend meetings from FNA2 onwards.
- Only professionals working with the young person should attend her/ his meeting and not 'extra' professionals.

Within the meetings

- Coffee, tea and juice should be offered to the young people and parents when they enter the meeting room.
- Seating should be arranged in an informal manner, e.g. easy chairs in circle, or other arrangement suitable to young person's physical abilities.
- Young people and parents should be introduced to professionals, as well as professionals being introduced to young people and parents.

- All meeting participants should be invited to suggest topics for the agenda, at the beginning of the meeting. The chairperson should take a wide view of their potential suitability and, if at all suitable, include subjects on agenda. If subjects are not suitable, the chairperson should recognise the suggestion and the group should decide when the subject would be addressed, by whom and by what time-table (in other words, make a decision).
- Emphasis should be on young people's abilities.
- Young people should not be criticised. Jokes at the meetings should not be made at the expense of the young people, although a lightness of atmosphere would be generally encouraged.
- If young people and parents ask questions, or state their views, these should be recognised by other participants and sensitively addressed.
- Given that all assessments should be distributed before the meeting with ample time for reading, no reports need be given at the meeting. Instead, the basis of discussion should initially be the young person's goals for her/ his future.
- Steps towards decision-making should be part of agenda:
 - discuss what the meeting hopes to achieve;
 - brain-storming of alternatives, based on the goals identified;
 - discuss advantages and disadvantages of alternatives, and from this basis develop decisions;
 - obtain consensus on decisions (if cannot come to consensus, usually follow young people's wishes);
 - discuss and assign people to be responsible for particular decisions;
 - discuss and decide on time-tables for decisions' implementation; and
 - summarise decisions, responsibility and time-tables.
- Certain decisions or parts of decisions can be implemented by the young people. Young people should take on this responsibility, if interested, with support by other participants if necessary.
- Greater involvement of 'outside' professionals in FNA meetings should be promoted. For example, the chairperson should introduce the 'outside' professionals and ask for their opinions.

Follow-up

- Within FNA2 meetings and beyond, review past meeting's decisions: re-state decision, report progress.
- One professional participant should be assigned at each meeting to follow-up implementation of decisions, with young person and relevant participants.
- Minutes should be made of the meetings and distributed to all invited participants.
- A short-term evaluation procedure should be administered after every meeting.
- A long-term evaluation procedure should be developed that follows young people through the FNA process and beyond. The evaluation would be subject to young

people's (and parents') consent. This recommendation could be made part of the Scottish School Leavers Survey's mandate.

Educational-Vocational (EV) Meetings

- Greater involvement of 'outside' professionals within assessments and meetings. Possibly these professionals should make own assessments, and present their own reports and recommendations at the meetings.
- Professionals should be hired to work permanently with the EV team, to ensure continuity for the clients.
- At the end of the assessment week, a date should be set with the young person, parent, and professionals for the EV meeting. The date should be set for no more than 3 weeks away. EV professionals would thus have to complete their reports by this deadline.
- Invite and ensure attendance of future service providers: e.g. Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) representative, employer representative, college representative, housing representative, etc.
- Seating should be arranged in an informal manner, e.g. easy chairs in circle, or other arrangement suitable to young person's physical abilities.
- Young people and parents should be introduced to professionals, and vice versa, in every meeting.
- Given the number of recommendations made at an EV meeting, key and overarching recommendations should be decided at the team meeting and presented at the end of the full meeting.
- Responsibility for recommendations should be clearly assigned within a meeting, as well as time-tables for implementation. This clarity should also be reflected in minutes and reports.
- Accuracy of meetings' minutes should be insured.
- Jargon and insensitive phrasing in individual team members' reports should be avoided.
- Individual team members' reports should be altered or a note attached if recommendations have changed as a result of the meeting.

Follow-up

- One professional participant should be assigned at meeting to follow-up implementation of decisions with young person.
- A short-term evaluation procedure should be administered after every meeting

- A long-term evaluation procedure should be developed that follows young people through the EV process and beyond. Participation should be subject to young people's consent.